THE AYODHYA
TEMPLE-MOSQUE
DISPUTE

THE AYODHYA TEMPLE-MOSQUE DISPUTE

FOCUS ON MUSLIM SOURCES

Harsh Narain

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To My Son-in-Law Anil Saran

PREFACE

This work sums up my search and research for historical sources, particularly Muslim, on the existence and desecration of the Rāma Janmabhūmi temple and its replacement with the Bābarī mosque at Ayodhya. That way it has emerged as a more or less full account of the sources shedding light on the issue. I have also taken due notice of the case sought to be made out against our theses by Muslim and 'secular' Hindu historians and scholars.

My research on the subject was occasioned in response to the challenge thrown time and again by Sayyid Shahabuddin for anyone to produce evidence of the alleged existence and demolition of the Rāma temple. In February 1990, I published the result of my research in certain dailies. My article on the subject in the *Indian Express* for February 26, 1990, aroused a controversy.

Subsequently, I hunted out more evidence in favour of my theses, the most significant one issuing from the pen of a descendant of Bābar – Aurangzīb's grand-daughter, to be pracise–, which should have clinched the issue for good.

The core of the case for Rāma-Janmabhūmi is as under :

It is futile to discuss the historicity of Rāma and identity and antiquity of Ayodhya in the context of the present controversy. Let historians fight it out at some other forum. What needs to be clearly understood in the present context is the patent fact that Hindus can no longer view with equanimity the mosque held by them to be standing on the debris of a temple called Rāma Janmabhūmi temple, Rāma temple, or Sītā Rasoī temple destroyed by Bābar.

The temple party are supposed to establish that the Bābarī mosque was built after destroying the temple, whereas the mosque party are supposed to establish that the mosque was built on vacant land. The former have marshalled a lot of positive evidence, based on British government and Congress government records; European travelogues; Sanskrit, Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic, Persian, and Urdu sources; as well as archaeological and art-historical findings. But the mosque party have not yet been able to produce a single positive evidence in its favour. The utmost that is sought to be done by them is to dismiss on one pretext or another in a rather negationistic fashion whatever evidence the temple party brings before them, as also to make much of non-reference to the demolition in Tulasīdāsa etc., knowing full well as historians that negative evidence by itself is seldom a passport to truth.

In fact, the mosque party appear to have had no inkling of the relevant Muslim sources brought to light by the temple party, nor have they had any concern for further excavations for more light on the issue. In fact, they have gone to the length of having the temerity of turning down the VHP's proposal for further excavations. Sample their method of negation. When evidence of existence and demolition of the temple was waiting to come to light, the temple party was jeered at for sustaining something without proof. When evidence of British authors was produced, it was rejected as motivated by the policy of divide and rule. When Muslim authors' evidence has been brought to light, it is sought to be rejected as motivated by Muslim bravado. Heaven knows what sort of evidence will satisfy them.

The mosque party have preferred no explanation why the mosque was erected at such a high altitude as that of the Ramkot, when there are clear injunctions in the *Sharī'ah* to situate a mosque in, or within easy reach from, the inhabited area for the sake of convenience. Neither do they have any evidence that the mound was inhabited by Muslims during Bābar's time.

The mosque party insist that the real Janmabhūmi is either the Janmasthān Sīta Rasoī temple on the other mound to the north-west of the Bābarī mosque, the two mounds being divided by a road built during the British regime, or the Rāma Chabūtarā in the courtyard of the mosque. Even if one is inclinded to grant either of the two hypotheses, no reason is given why the mosque should have been built so as to enclose the Chabūtarā within its compound, when Muslims cannot brook ringing of the temple-bell while offering their prayer. Besides, according to a teaching of the Prophet cited by Shāh Walīullāh, [1] infidels should be kept at such a distance from Muslims that the former's light falls outside the latter's range of visibility.

In his *Hadīqah-ī Shuhadā* (1956), Mirzā Jān quotes a passage from a work entitled *Saḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'ih-i Bahādurshāhī*, a copy of which, made in 1816, was found by him in the library of Mirzā Ḥaydar Shukoh s/o Mirzā Sulaymān Shukoh s/o Prince Dārā Shukoh, which says that the mosque in question has displaced the temple in question. The work he attributes to Aurangzīb's grand-daughter. It seems to have been composed in 1707 circa. Instead of trying to find it out, the pro-mosque historians dismiss it as either spurious or non-existent. But Mirzā Jān is not the only author to refer to it. Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr, author of the *Fasānah-ī 'Ibrat* and a contemporary of Mirzā Jān, refers to it as telling the tale of the temple-demolition and also as a work easily available in his time. Besides, there are about a dozen nineteenth-century records from Muslim pen which contain similar information 'gathered from past records and books of history.' How can they all be belied ? Especially when the information had the potentiality of jeopardizing their case for recovery of the alleged Hanumangadhi mosque pending in the royal court and at any rate by implication bolstering up the Bairagī-s' case for recovery of the Rāma temple. It is indeed significant that prior to the present controversy the fact of the temple-demolition was not called in question even once.

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[1] Shāh Walīullāh, the *Hujjatullāh-i 'l-Bālighah*, II, 'Unwānu'l-Hudūd (50), Karachi, n.d., p.468

It appears that after Bābar the mosque came to be deserted by Muslims and continued to be used by Hindus till, say, the turn of the 17th century. That is why William Finch (1608-11) found neither Muslims nor the mosque but only *Paṇḍā-s* in the Ramkot, where the 'castle and houses' connected with Rāma were in ruins; Abu 'l-Faḍl speaks of Ayodhya as the place of Rāma's incarnation and of the great Rāmanavamī fair held there annually; Sant Lāḷadāsa, author of the *Avadhavilāsa* (1675), gives details about the birth-place of Rāma without referring to any mosque; Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī, author of the *Khulaṣatu't-Tawārīkh* (1695-96), mentions the replacement by a mosque of the Keśava Rāi temple at Mathura on the orders of Aurangzīb but is silent about the similar incident at Ayodhya, though he does mention Ayodhya as the birth-place of Rāma and thereby as 'one of the holiest places'. It appears that the Rāma temple fell a victim soon after to the forces of temple destruction let loose by Aurangzīb, which is why it is as late as circa 1707 that the mosque came to be remembered in the *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣaī'ih-i Bahādurshāhī* after a gap of 275 years, without, however, any reference to the name of the destroyer. No wonder that, according to Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710-1785), who toured Avadh during 1766-1771, it was widely acknowledged that the replacement of the temple by the mosque was effected by Bābar or Aurangzīb. Even during Aurangzīb's time, however, the mosque could not attain the shape of a full-fledged mosque. The map of Ayodhya found in the Kapad-Dwār Collection of the City Palace Musuem, Jaipur, shows that, in 1717, the superstructure of the 'mosque' comprised of three *Śikhara-s* (temple-spires) had no domes but only corbelled ceilings originally. The domes owe their existence to someone else than Bābar and Aurangzīb, who came after them.

The Rāma Chabūtarā, attributed without any basis to the ingenuity of Akbar, is mentioned first by Tieffenthaler during 1766-1771, and shown and in the Kapad-Dwār map of 1717, and is conspicuous by its absence in the *Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'ih-i Bahādurshāhī* (circa 1707). May be, it came into existence during the interval.

The so-called tolerance-teaching testament of Bābar to Humāyūṅ has turned out to be a spurious document. The real testament delivered by Bābar to Humāyūṅ orally in the former's death-bed is totally silent about the contents of the written one.

Now, what is to be done with the structure of the Bābarī mosque ? The verdict of the *Sharī'ah* is clear : While it is quite lawful, rather a religious duty, to destroy infidels' places of worship in *Jihād*, once they become subjects of a Muslim state and agree to pay the *Jizyah*, they become *Dhimmī-s* (protected ones), whose places of worship are protected by the state, though they cannot be allowed to build new, or sometimes even to repair the old ones. Since under and even before Bābar (under Muslim rule), Hindus were *Dhimmī-s*, Bābar violated the provisions of the *Sharī'ah* in destroying the Rāma temple and building the mosque on its site. Not being based on piety (*taqwā*), this mosque is a mosque of evil (*masjidu 'ḍ - ḍirār*), Qur'ānically speaking, and deserves the same treatment as accorded to the latter, viz. destruction.

I enclose the scheme of transliteration followed generally in this book. I have tried to adhere to it in respect of Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, and Urdu proper names also but have had to deviate a little here and there in respect of modern ones.

The scheme contains full lists of Romanized Arabic and Devanāgarī characters. Persian adopts them in full, with an addition of four characters– پ , چ , ژ ,and گ . Likewise, Urdu takes over all Arabic and Persian characters including the additions, borrowing in its turn three characters–ٹ, ڈ , and ڑ –from Devanāgarī. We have thought it fit to give the Roman, Devanāgarī, and Arabic alphabets in full, and only additional Persian-Urdu character.

A word about the spelling of the name Bābar. The name is spelt as both 'Bābur' and 'Bābar' but pronounced as 'Bābar'. Not being acquainted with Turkish, to which the word belongs, I thought it safe to follow the prevalent pronunciation in spelling the word. After seeing the body of the book through the press, I find that E. Denison Rose has discussed the issue in detail while introducing *A Collection of Poems by the Emperor Babur* (Calcutta, 1910), p. i, and come to the conclusion that the name should be distinctly vocalized and spelt as 'Bābur' or 'Bābūr'. But, so far as the present work is concerned, it is rather too late to mend.

I am beholden to Dr. Chandrika Prasad Dikshita 'Lalita', Director of the Chandadas Sahitya Shodh Samsthan, Banda, for kindly presenting me a copy of the *Avadhavilāsa* by Sant Lāladāsa, which contains a valuable account of the Rāma-Janmabhūmi akin to that contained in the *Ayodhyā-Māhātmya*. As metioned above, the *Indian Express* published my article on Muslim Testimony on February 26, 1990, which aroused some controversy. The article and the controversy find place in Appendix VII. I am indebted to the esteemed daily for this. I take the opportunity of thanking my co-experts on the VHP side in the dialogue with AIBMAC arranged by the Home Ministry, who, too, have helped reinforce the temple case by bringing to light archaeological and other material benefited from by me.

I must not forget to express my gratefulness to Mr. J.L. Gupta, who has contributed the Name-Index to it.

Lucknow
Deepawali, 1992

Harsh Narain

THE GENERAL SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Roman	Devanāgarī	Arabic	Persian
a	अ	ا	
ā	आ	آ	
ai	ऐ		
au	औ		
aw		او	
’	ऽ (अवग्रह)	ء	
‘		ع	
b	ब	ب	
bh	भ		
c	च		چ
ch	छ		
chh			
d	द	د	
ḍ	ड/ड़	ڈ	
dh	ध	ذ	
ḍh	ढ/ढ़		
e	ए		
f		ف	
g	ग		گ
gh	घ	غ	
h	ह	ه	
ḥ	ः	ح	
i	इ	ی	
ī	ई	ى	
j	ज	ج	
jh	झ		
jñ	ज्ञ		
k	क	ک	

Roman	Devanāgarī	Arabic	Persian*
kh	ख	خ	
l	ल	ل	
m	म	م	
ṁ	nasal		
n	न	ن	
ṅ	ङ		
ṇ	ण		
ñ	ञ		
o	ओ	او، ضمّہ	
p	प		پ
ph	फ		
q		ق	
r	र	ر	
ṛ	ऋ		
s	स	س	
ś	श	ش	
ṣ	ष	ص	
sh			
t	त	ت	
ṭ		ط	
th	थ	ث	
ṭh	ठ		
u	उ	ضمّہ	
ū	ऊ	او	
v	व		
w		و	
x			
y	य	ی	
z		ز	
ẓ		ظ	
Z̤			ژ

* See the preface first

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1

THE DISPUTE

It was almost a rule with Muslim conquerors and rulers to strive to annihilate polytheism and idol-worship (*shirk*) and other forms of infidelity (*kufr*) by, *inter alia*, desecrating or destroying infidels' places of worship and often converting them into mosques, monasteries, etc. or raising on their sites new mosques, monasteries, etc. The number of such desecrations, destructions, conversions, and constructios runs into tens of thousands. Taking account of some well attested vandalisms of this kind, we find that Maḥmūd the Ghaznawid (997-1030) is responsible for converting several thousands of temples into mosques (*chandīṅ hazār butkhānah rā masjid gardānīd*).[1] He burnt down one thousand temples of Mathura and desecrated or despoiled ten thousand temples of Qannauj.[2] His successor Sulṭān Abu 'l-Muzaffar Ibrāhīm bin Mas'ūd (1059-1099) destroyed at one time one thousand temples one thousand years old each, in Ganga-Yamuna Doāb and Malwa.[3] Likewise Muḥammad the Ghorid (1175-1216) converted one thousand temples of Varanasi into mosques[4] and Quṭbu 'd-Dīn Aibak (1192-1206-1210) pulled down one thousand temples of Delhi by employing elephants.[5] Thousands of mosques might have succumbed, in Kuch-Bihar, Ujjain, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Golkonda, Bijapur, Maharashtra, and certainly in several other parts of the Mughul empire, to the successive ordinances promulgated by Auraṅgzīb (1657-1707) from time to time.[1] And as many as over eight thousand temples are reported to have been desecrated and despoiled by as late a Sulṭān as Ṭīpū (1782-1799).[2] Incidentally, Sita Ram Goel lists some two thousand mosques and other such Muslim monuments standing on the sites of temples demolished by Muslim rulers.[3] Besides, thousands of temples were descrated or despoiled or replaced by mosques etc. by the Khaljī-s, Tughluq-s, and other Muslim emperors on one hand and regional rulers like Sikandar Butshikan (1389-1413) and 'Alī Shāh (1413-1420) of Kashmir, Maḥmūd Khaljī (1436-1469) of Malwa, 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh I (1557-1579) of Bijapur, and several other such rulers.

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[1] Minhāj Sirāj, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p.9

[2] Al - 'Uṭbī, *Kitābu'l-Yamīniyy* (Arabic), Elliot & Dowson, *History of India As Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. II,pp. 44-46; Ghiyāthu 'd-Dīn Muḥammad bin Ḥusāmu 'd-Dīn, *Habību 's-Siyar*, Eng. tr., pp.179-180

[3] Khawājah Mas'ūd bin Sa'd bin Salmān, *Dīwān-i Salmān*, Elliot & Dowson, IV, pp. 518-519

[4] Ṣadru 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥasan Nizāmī, *Tāju 'l-Mu'āṣīr*, *ibid.*, II, pp. 216-217

[5] Shaykh Muḥammad Ikrām, *Chashmah-i Kawthar*, p.59

To be sure, India under Muslim domination was India under siege, India under veritable slavery, from which it had a moment's respite under British rule, which finds an echo in the following Hindi stanza sang by Bhāratendu Harishchandra while welcoming the Prince of Wales in 1875 :

Jaise ātapa-tapita ko chāyā sukhada gunāta
Javana-rāja ke anta tuva āgama timi darasāta
Masjid lakhi Bisunātha ḍhiga pare hiye jo ghāva
Tā kaṅha marham sarisa yaha tuva darsana nara-rāva

In English : 'Your visit at the demise of the Muslim rule, O ruler of men ! proves to be as soothing as a shade to a sun-stricken man. Your *darśana* (appearance) here is like ointment to the wound sustained by our heart on our seeing the mosque near the Viśvanātha temple.' Indeed, we were veritable slaves of the Muslim rulers in general but subjects of the British. Our subjection to the British had significant redeeming features. As I have said elsewhere, 'The Muslim rulers burnt but the British built libraries, rescuing and recovering our ancient texts from extinction; the former ruined but the latter rescued ancient monuments and symbols of perennial Indian culture; the former obstructed but the latter constructed centres of Sanskrit learning; the former prevented but the latter permitted practice and propagation of as well as conversion and reconversion to Hinduism.'

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[1] S.R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, p.277

[2] *The Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Modern, Part IV, p.2584

[3] Arun Shourie & others, *Hindu Temples*, Vol. I

Indeed, in our earnestness to get rid of the subjection to the British, we turned a blind eye to the danger of slavery to the forces of Islam. In the result the Muslims carved a *Dār al-Islām* (later split into two) out of the Hindus' only worthwhile abode that is India, virtually emptied the Western part of the *Dār al-Islām* of the Hindus, are enacting the same drama in the eastern part, and have managed to get the upper hand in the truncated India that is Bharat.

There was, all the same, a silver-lining in the dark cloud of the partition, viz. an opportunity to get rid of the Muslim problem, miscalled communal problem, by means of transfer of population as suggested by B.R.Ambedkar as also M.A.Jinnah. But we did not heed them. The next best course would have been to circumscribe the Muslims' choice to continue here by such conditions that the millennium-old problem could not raise its head again. At any rate, restoration of some of the usurped temples to the Hindus ought to have been secured then and there.

This was not done. In 1949, however, certain idols including one of 'Rām Lalā Virājamān' as they say, made their appearance by human or superhuman design, speaking non-committally, to the accompaniment of chants and music. Later, a claim was in the air for restoration of the Rāma Janmabhūmi at Ayodhya, Kṛṣṇa Janmabhūmi at Mathura, and Kāshī Viśvanātha temple at Varanasi, said to have been replaced by mosques wholly or partially.

The Hindu side has chosen, however, to agitate for the Rāma Janmabhūmi only, holding the other two claims in abeyance. Their case is that the Rāma Janmabhūmi temple was replaced by Bābar by what has come to be called Bābarī mosque. Muslim leaders demand proof. And with this we are concerned in this work.

I happen to be a member of the panel of experts appointed by the Vishva Hindu Parishad to hold a dialogue on the issue with the experts of the All India Babari Masjid Action

Committee under the auspices of the Home Ministry. Somehow, the first dialogue proved abortive.

I have all along been inclined to believe that the Hindu side has unnecessarily complicated matters for itself by inviting the imbroglio of reconstruction of the Rāma temple. What is crucial in this case is repossession rather than reconstruction. And now the slogan of reconstruction has yielded place to that of (new) construction. Thus the real issue has given way to the issue as to where the construction should take place. And the Hindus' proverbial self-complacency argues: Why fight for the temple site ? Every site is Rāma's site.

Another blunder of the Hindus has been the half-hearted manner in which they are pursuing the matter in the law-court, of which, however, the less said the better.

Well, all relevant British government records, followed by the *U.P. District Gazetteers–Faizabad* compiled and published by the Congress government in U.P. in 1960, declare it with one voice that the Bābarī mosque at Ayodhya is standing on the debris of a Rāma Janmabhūmi temple demolished at the behest of Bābar in 935 A.H./1528 A.D. On the other hand, Muslim leaders as well as leftist historians and politicians have since the last decade been proclaiming that existence and demolition of such a temple is a myth floated by the British in pursuance of their policy of divide-and-rule.

The Muslim scholars further contend that, being a true Muslim, Bābar could not have tampered with any temple that way, for, they argue, a mosque erected on usurped land would be no mosque in the eye of the *Sharī'ah*. On this ground, they have all along been offering to hand over the mosque to the Hindus, provided it be shown independently of British sources that it has displaced a temple. Sayyid Ṣabāhu 'd-Dīn 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān modifies the stand thus: 'It is also thinkable that some mosque was erected close to or at a short distance from a temple demolished for some special reason, but never was a mosque built on the site of a temple anywhere.'[1]

Well, granting for the nonce that the Bābarī mosque cannot be shown to have displaced a temple, there are thousands of mosques which can indisputably be.[2] Will the offer hold good for them ? And what about the Ka'bah ? Was it not converted from an idol-temple, a temple housing as many as three hundred sixty idols of gods and goddesses ?

The position of the *Sharī'ah* on the issue will be explored in chapter *XIII infra*.

In connexion with the temple-mosque dispute, the so-called secular scholars and leaders tend often to belittle or ignore the relevance, value, and power of the Hindus' indomitable faith in Rāma and his place of birth and question the historicity of Rāma, antiquity of the Rāma cult, antiquity of the existing Ayodhya, and the mosque-site's being the exact birth-place of Rāma. These are important topics for historians but not very germane to the problem in hand. Existence or non-existence of some temple, believed by millions to be the Rāma Janmabhūmi temple, followed by forcible replacement by the present mosque, is the only point at issue. Innocuous religious beliefs must be respected in a democratic spirit, even where they may be found unacceptable to others. Otherwise, similar questions will begin to be raised on the dogmas of Islam and other religions and solution of our problem will become an impossibility.

Take the example of the Ka'bah. The Prophet passed fourteen years and a half of his twentythree-year long ministry without the Ka'bah as his *Qiblah* (towards which one turns while praying). All these years, it was Jerusalem towards which the faithful were required to bow in prayer. Then he received the revelation from on high to change the Qiblah to the Ka'bah,[3] which remained the Qiblah for eight years and a half till the Prophet's death. To that end, a myth was invented, the myth of the religion of Ibrāhim (millat-iIbrāhim)[1] or the religion of Ḥanīf (*millat-i Ibrāhima Ḥanīfan*)[2] and reconstruction of the Ka'bah by Ibrāhim and Ismā'īl,[3] even though there is not a trace of evidence that Ibrāhim ever visited Mecca. Who can prove the existence of the religion of Ibrāhim and reconstruction of the Ka'bah by him ?

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[1] *Loc. cit.*; Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples*, Vol. II

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] Q., al-Baqarah (2) 125, 144, 149, 150

We accordingly leave such side-issues and proceed to consider the question of evidence of the existence of the Rāma temple and its destruction by Bābar.

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1. Q., *ibid*. 130
2. *Ibid*. 135; Āl 'Imrān (3) 3.94; al-An'ām (6) 162; an-Niḥal (16) 123
3. Q., al-Baqarah (2) 127

2

LITERARY EVIDENCE : NON-MUSLIM SOURCES

Notwithstanding an attitude of unconcern and indifference on the part of historians in general and of non-cooperation and antipathy on the part of Muslim and leftist historians in particular, certain nationalist historians and scholars have succeeded in producing ample evidence of the existence and demolition of the temple in question, categorizable as under:

1. Archaeological finds
2. Architectural, art-historical, and epigraphical findings
3. Literary evidence

   Literary evidence is derivable from the following sources:

   i. Non-Muslim sources
   ii. Arabic and Persian sources
   iii. Urdu sources

Let us devote this chapter to non-Muslim literary sources for facility of treatment.

I. British government records

1 Montgomery Martin, British Surveyor, *History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India,* (a chiselled and revised version of No. 3 *infra*), Vol. II, 1838, pp. 335-336. Martin says, 'The bigot by whom the temples were destroyed, is said to have erected mosques on the situations of the most remarkable temples; but the mosque at Ayodhya... is ascertained by an inscription on its walls... to have been built by Babur....' He also speaks of the pillars of black stone in the mosque, which according to him were taken from some Hindu building.

2 Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*, Vol. IV, 1854, pp. 739-740. Thornton refers to the tradition that 'Rama took his flight to heaven, carrying with him the people of his city; in consequence of which it remained desolate until repeopled by Vikramaditya, king of Oojein...and by him embellished with 360 temples....according to native tradition, they were demolished by Aurangzebe, who built a mosque on part of the site. Thornton discredits the tradition, 'attributing the work to the conqueror Baber.' He also refers to 'fourteen columns' 'said to have been taken from the ruins of the Hindoo fanes'.

3 A 10000-page manuscript by Francis Hamilton Buchanan (1807-1814) entitled *Survey of Gorakhpur District*, Vol. I, British Library, London, MS No. Eur D91, vide Sher Singh, 'Who Built the Babri Masjid?', *Daily Telegraph* for 31.10.1991, read with Durga Prasad Bhattacharya's letter in the *Statesman* for January 11-12, 1991. Its microfilmed set is said to be available at the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, and summary in records Nos. (1) and (2) above. He takes note of the tradition that the mosque in question was built by Aurangzīb by demolishing a Hindu temple. He also refers to the pillars 'in the mosque built by Bābar' and adds that 'it is probable they were taken from the ruins of the place.'

4 Surgeon General Edward Balfour, *Encyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia*, 1858, p.56. According to Balfour, Ayodhya has 'three mosques on the sites of three Hindu shrines: the Janmasthan on the site where Rama was born....'

5 P. Carnegy, *A Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad, with the Old Capitals Ajudhia and Fyzabad, Lucknow*, 1870, pp.5-7, 19-21. Carnegy states that Bābar built the mosque at the site then occupied by the 'fine temple in the Janmasthān ; for many of its columns are still in existence and in good preservation, having used by the Musalmāns in the construction of the Bābarī

mosque.' He also reports that 'the Hindūs and Mahomedans alike used to worship in the mosque-temple. Since the British rule a railing has been put up to prevent dispute, within which in the mosque the Mahomedans pray, while outside the fence the Hindūs have raised a platform on which they make their offerings.'

6 *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 6-7. It simply follows Carnegy verbatim.

7 A.F.Mettell, Report of the *Settlement of the Land Revenue Fyzabad District, Allahabad*, 1880, pp.216-217, 234-235, 238. He, too, refers to the replacement of the Janmasthan temple by the mosque in question.

8 *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Sereis, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Vol. II, pp. 338-339. It says, 'At one corner of a vast mound known as Rāmkot, or the fort of Rāma, is the holy spot where the hero was born. Most of the enclosure is occupied by a mosque built by Bābar from the remains of an old temple, and in the outer portion a small platform and shrine mark the birthplace.'

9 A. Führer, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Archaeological Survey of India Report, 1891, pp.296-297. Führer refers to the tradition that on Janmasthan 'Mīr Khān built a masjid in A.H. 930, during the reign of Bābar, which still bears his name. This old temple must have been a fine one, for many of its columns have been utilized by the Musalmāns in the construction of Bābar's Masjid.'

10 H.R. Neville, *Barabanki District Gazetteer*, Lucknow, 1902, pp. 168-169. Neville also says that the Janmasthan temple 'was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque.'

11 H.R. Neville, *Fyzabad District Gazetteer*, Lucknow, 1905, pp.172-177. According to the author, 'The Janmasthan was in the Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In 1528 A.D. Babar came to Ayodhya and halted here for a week. He destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque, still known as Babar's mosque. The materials of the

old structure were largely employed, and many of the columns were in good preservation.'

12 Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1934, which identifies the Bābarī mosque with Rāma Janmabhūmi.

13 Col. J.E.A.Chamier, District Judge, Fyzabad's order dated March 26, 1886, in Civil Appeal No.27 of 1885, Mahant Raghubīr Dās versus Secretary of State for India and Muḥammad Aṣghar: '...the masjid built by Babar stands on the border of the town of Ayodhya, that is to say to the west and south it is clear of habitations. It is most unfortunate that a masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event occurred 356 years ago it is too late now to remedy the grievance....'[1]

II. Congress government records

EV. Joshi, *U.P. District Gazetteers–Faizabad*, Lucknow, 1960, p.352. (Mrs.) Joshi writes, 'The Janmasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. It seems that in 1528 Babur visited Ayodhya and under his orders this ancient temple was destroyed and on the site was built what came to be known as Babur's mosque... Outside the outer wall of this contested shrine there is an old and broken image of the Varah (boar).'

III. Travelogues

1 Joseph Tieffenthaler, *Description Historique et Geographique de L' Inde* (History and Geography of India) in Latin. French translation by Jean Bernoulli in 1786. Tieffenthaler (1710-1785) toured in Avadh during 1766-1771. He writes, 'But a spot particularly famous is known as Sitha Rassoi, i.e. Table of Sita, Ram's wife .... Emperor Aurengzebe demolished the fortress called Ramkot and got erected a Muslim temple with three domes, on the same place. Others say that it was constructed by Babor. Fourteen pillars of black stone, 5 spans high, are located in

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[1] *Muslim India*, March 1986, p.107

the fortress; 12 of these pillars are in the interior arch of the mosque; 2 (out of 12) are at the door of the cloister. The other two are in the tomb of an unknown Maure (Muslim).... On the left, one can see a square box raised five inches above the earth....Hindus call it Bedi (i.e. the cradle) because formerly it was the house where Beschan and his 3 brothers were born under the form of Ram.... In his slight, Aurengzebe or according to some Babor destroyed this place in order to prevent Hindus from performing their rituals on this place. However, they still peform their rituals at another place which is the birthplace of Ram, by going round it three times and then prostrating flat on the ground.' The author obviously refers to Rāmanavamī festival when he adds, 'On 24th of Chaitrra a large number of people gather here to celebrate the birth of Ram extremely popular throughout India.'[1]

2 Travelogue of William Finch, a European traveller (1608-11), incorporated in William Foster, Early Travels in India, 1583-1619, London, 1921, pp. 176. Finch observes, 'Heere are also the ruines of Ranichand (s) castle and houses, which the Indians acknowled(g)e for the great God, saying that he tooke flesh upon him to see the tamasha of the world. In these ruines remayne certain Bramenes, who record the names of all such Indians as wash themselves in the river running thereby; which custome, they say, hath continued foure lackes of yeeres (which is three hundred ninetie foure thousand and five hundred yeeres before the worlds creation). Some two miles on the further side of the river is a cave of his with a narrow entrance.... Out of the ruines of this castle is yet much gold tryed. [This practice is mentioned in the Ā'īn (Blochman and Jerret's transln, vol. ii, p.171) -- editor's note]

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[1] Abhas Kumar Chatterjee, 'Ram Janmabhoomi: Some More Evidence', *History and Casuistry*, pp. 105 ff., gives a slightly different translation.

IV. Sanskrit sources

1. *The Skanda-Purāṇa*

i) The Badarikāśrama-Māhātmya, in which a rather clear indication of the Rāma temple is discernible. It says that 'One who visits Ayodhya the way enjoined sheds all one's sins and finds one's abode in the house of Hari (*Hari-mandira*).[1] Likewise, 'for one who takes bath in the Svargadvāra and visits the Rāma temple (*Rāmālaya*) nothing remains to be done here and he has fulfilled his duty.'[2] It is difficult to date this work.

(ii) The Ayodhyā-Māhātmya refers to *Rāmajanmasthāna* once, *janmasthāna* twice, and *Janmabhūmi* twice.[3] Paying a visit (*pradarśana*) to the same is said to be infinitely meritorious, hence one may be tempted to take the names for some shrine. This work is found quoted in the *Tīrthaprakāśa*, viz. Mitramiśra, *Vīramitrodaya*, Vol.X; in the *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, viz. Jīvagosvāmin, *Śatasandarbha*, fourth *Sandarbha*; and in a late Sanskrit work, *Satyopākhyāna*, pertaining to the Rasika branch of Rāmabhakti.[4] The work cannot, therefore, be later than the 14th century A.D.

2. The *Bhusuṇḍi-Rāmāyaṇa*, assignable to early 16th century, does not go beyond mentioning Hanumān,

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1. *Ayodhyāṁ vidhivad dṛṣṭvā purīṁ muktyekasādhanīm*
Sarvapāpavinirmuktaḥ prayāti Hari-mandiram
Skanda-Purāṇa, II, Vaiṣṇava-Khaṇḍa (2), Badarikāśrama-Māhātmya (3), 1.24

2. *Svargadvāre naraḥ snātvā dṛṣṭvā Rāmālayaṁ śuciḥ*
Na tasya kṛtyaṁ paśyāmi, kṛtakāryo bhaved yataḥ
Ibid., Śloka 26

3. *Tasmāt sthānata aiśāne Rāmajanma pravartate*
janmasthānam idaṁ proktaṁ mokṣādiphalasādhanam
Vighneśvarāt pūrvabhāge Vāsiṣṭhād uttere tathā
Laumaśāt paścime bhāge janmasthānaṁ tataḥ smṛtam
Kapilāgosahasrāṇi yo dadāti dine dine
Tatphalaṁ samavāpnoti janmabhūmeḥ pradarśanāt
Niyamasthaṁ naraṁ dṛṣṭvā janmasthānaṁ viśeṣataḥ
Mātāpitror gurūṇāṁ ca bhaktim udvahatāṁ satām
Tatphalaṁ samavāpnoti Janmabhūmeḥ pradarśanāt
Ibid., *Ayodhyā-Māhātmya* (8), Adhyāya 10, Śloka-s 18, 19, 22

4. Hans Bakker, *Ayodhyā*, Part I, pp. 129-130

Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa, and Vibhīṣaṇa as guards of the forts (*koṭa*-s) of Ayodhya.[1]

V. Hindi sources

1. The *Avadhavilāsa* Mahākāvya by Sant Lāladāsa, edited and published by Dr. Chandrika Prasad Dikshit, Director, Akhila Bhāratīya Candadāsa Sāhitya Śodha Saṁsthāna, Civil Lines, Banda, U.P. in 1983. Santa Lāladāsa belongs to the 17th century A.D. and composed the work in 1732 of Vikrama era,[2] viz. 1675 A.D. Its 11th chapter (*viśrāma*) titled *'Janmotsava'* describes the *Rāma Janmabhūmi/Janmasthāna*, which according to it, secures heaven for whoever pays a visit to it. Its description of the location of the *Janmabhūmi/Janmasthāna* appears to follow the *Ayodhya-Māhātmya*.[3]
2. Jaswant, a poet of Avadhī, is said to have composed 70 poems on the wars between Mīr Bāqī and the Hindus over the possession of the Janmabhūmi. Rāmagopāla Pāṇḍeya 'Śārada' treats him as Mīr Bāqī's contemporary, giving three samples of his poems which do appear to give the air of their contemporaneity. It is also possible, however, that the poems are based on some contemporary account of the wars. Two of the poems[4] describe the war between

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[1] *Hanumantaṁ ca, Sugrīvaṁ, Lakṣmaṇaṁ ca, Vibhīṣaṇam*
Ayodhyā-koṭapālāṅa ca prātar utthāya yaḥ smaret
Kalyāṇaṁ samavāpnoti duḥsvapnādīṅ's ca nāśayet
Bhuśuṇḍi-Rāmāyaṇa, I, 102, 118-119

[2] *Saṁvat satrah sai batis sudi Baiśakh sukāla*
Lāl Avadh madhi rahi racyo Avadhabilāsa rasāla
Lāladāsa, *Avadhavilāsa* 1.46, p. 9

[3] *Ibid.*, 11. 375, p. 268

[4] *Kāṭi kāṭi kallā se dupallā bhūmi dāri dīnheṅ*
Māno mīcu āpahī bha'ī hai rūpa khāṅḍe kī
Allā Allā bāli ke Musallā karai hallā lage
Rāh dhari bhāgi ke Goshā'īṅganj Tāṅḍe kī
kholi pheṅki luṅgī au lagāya ke tilaka bhāl
Roya hātha jori lāge māṅge bhīkh chhāṅḍe kī
Phabbī rana-bhūmi jhūm jhabbī bha'ī Hindun kī
Dekhi ke junabbī jor Devīdīn Pāṅḍe kī
Īṅ; ke lagat hī caṭak: khoparī jo ga'i
Bāṅdhi kasi sāphā soṅ turant bīra haṅsigo
Bhāṣai Jaswanta ṭāp ghoḍā kī aḍāya danta

Mir Bāqī and Devīdīn Pāṇḍeya and the third[1] between Humāyūṅ and Rānī Jayarāja Kumārī. Dr. Janardana Upadhyaya of K.S. Saket P.G. College, Avadh University, writes to me, however, that both Devīdīn Pāṇḍeya and the Rānī belonged to the 19th century and that the Rānī did lead a war for the *Janmabhūmi*. According to him, there did exist a Jaswant Kavi in about the first half or first quarter of this century. No other Jaswant Kavi is known to those who are supposed to know, as belonging to Avadh.

VI. Panjabi sources

Guru Nānak was a contemporary of Bābar and has given an eye-witness acount of the ravages wrought by the tyrant at Aimanabad. The great Guru's *Bābar-Vāṇī* contains the strongest ever condemnation of Bābar's vandalism. The text mentions, inter alia, that, thanks to the vandal's destruction mania, temples as strong as a thunderbolt were set on fire:[2]

Thān mukām jale bij mandar muchhi muchhi kuir rulā'iyā

Guru Nānak, according to Bhā'ī Mani Singh's *Pothī Janam Sākhī*, said to have been composed in 1787 Anno Vikramī/1730 A.D., visited Ayodhya and said to his Muslim disciple Mardānā: '*Mardāniā! eh Ajudhiā nagarī Srī Rāmchandra Jī kī hai. So, chal, iskā darsan karī'e.*'[3] Translation : 'Mardānā! this Ayodhya city belongs to Śrī Rāmachandra Jī. Therefore, let

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Sindhur ke sīśa ko kasauṭī jāni kasigo
Bhayabhita haudā meiṅ lukānyo jāya Mīr Bāṅkī
Khīci khaḍga myān soṅ turant tom tasigo
Sunḍa kāti munḍa kāṭi aur lauha kunḍa kāṭi
Kāṭi phīlawān ko jamīṅ meiṅ jāya dhaṅsigo
Rāmgopāla Pāṇdey 'Śārada', *Śrī Rāma Janmabhūmi kā Raktarañjita Itihāsa*, pp. 67-68

[1] *Camma camma camaki camū meiṅ cañcalā sī cāru*
Rudhira taranginī meiṅ cān soṅ tirai lagī
Rana bhūmi nabha meiṅ ghumaṅḍi aṅdhiārī rūpa
Ghor ghana mālā jyoṅ ghaṭān sī ghirai lagī
Lālī sī karāl Mahākālī hwai nikāri jībh
Lappa lappa lapaki bhujanginī bhirai lagī
Chattā se mukattādār dāḍhī wāre śīśan pai
Rānī Jayarāja kī junabbī yoṅ phirai lagī Loc. cit.

[2] *Guru Nānak Racanāvalī*, p.246

[3] Rajendra Singh, *Sikkh Itihāsa meiṅ Śrī Rāma-Janmabhūmi*, p.10

us have its *darśana.'* Again, according to *Bhā'ī Bālā Wālī Janam Sākhī*, composed in 1940 A.V./1883 A.D., the Guru said: *'Bhāī Bālā! ih nagarī Srī Rāmchandra Jī kī hai. Ethe Srī Rāmchandra Jī ne avatār dhār ke charitra kīte han, so dekh ke hī chalī'e.'*[1] Translation : 'Bhā'ī Bālā! this city belongs to Śrī Rāmachandra Jī. Here Śrī Rāmachandra Jī took incarnation and performed (human) deeds. Therefore, walk with caution.'

A more relevant account is found in Bābā Sukhbāsī Rām Bedī's *Guru Nānak Bans Prakāśa*, composed in 1886 A.V./1829 A.D.:[2]

Chale tahāṅ te sati-gurū Mardānā le saṅgi
Āye Audhpurī bikhe Sarju nadi jih saṅgi
Sarjū jal manjan ki'ā darsan Rām nihār
Ātam rūpa anant prabh chale magan hitu dhār

Tr.: 'Guru Nānak left the place with Mardānā and reached Ayodhya by which the Sarayū river flows. After bathing in the Sarayū, he gazed at Rāma for darśana and then left overjoyed and earning his merit.' It appears, therefore, that, if the account is faithful, the great Guru did visit the Rāma temple, which had not yet suffered desecration.

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1. *Loc. cit.*
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11

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LITERARY EVIDENCE: ARABIC AND PERSIAN SOURCES

I. Arabic sources

1 Al-Bīrūnī appears to be the earliest writer who mentions Ayodhya. He does not, however, go beyond roughly indicating the location of Ayodhya: 'Marching from Bārī along the Ganges on its eastern side, you pass the following stations: – *Ajodaha* (Ayodhyā, Oudh), 25 *farsakh* from Bārī; the famous Banārasī, 20 *farsakh*.'[1]

2 The *Jannah al-Mashriq* wa *Matla 'an-Nūr al-Mashriq*, retitled as *Al-Hind-u fi al - 'Ahd al-Islāmī*, by Maulānā Hakīm Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥayy, translated into Urdu by Maulānā Shams Tabrīz Khāṅ under the title *Hindustān Islāmī 'Ahd meiṅ* and introduced by the author's illustrious son Maulānā Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadawī alias 'Alī Mīaṅ. The author describes the mosque in question thus: 'And among them is the great mosque that was built by the Tīmūrid king Bābar in the secred city of Ajodhya. It is believed that Rāma Chandra, considered to be the manifestation of God, was born here. There is a long story about his wife Sītā. There was a big temple for them in this city. At a certain place Sītā used to sit and cook food for her consort. Well, the said king Bābar demolished it and built a mosque at that very place with chiselled stone in 923 A.H.'[2]

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[1] *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, p.200

[2] If the Urdu translation is followed, it will read thus: 'This mosque was built by Bābar at Ajodhya which the Hindus call the birth-place of Rāmachandra jī. There is a well known story about his wife Sītā. It is said that Sītā had a temple here in which she lived and cooked food for her husband. On that very site Bābar constructed this mosque in 923 A.H.' Maulawiyy Shams Tabrīz Khān, *Hindustān Islāmī 'Ahd*

The author died in 1923 and the translation appeared in print in 1973. I have relevant extracts from the original (vide Appendix I), which is not available or, at any rate, is not within our reach. Even the Urdu translation is said to have been withdrawn from the market and many Muslim libraries,[1] though I possess a copy.

II. Persian sources

1 Abu 'l-Faḍl's *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* speaks about Ayodhya thrice: 'Ayodhya, commonly called Awadh. The distance of forty *kos* to the east, and twenty to the north is regarded as sacred ground. On the ninth of the light half of the month of *Chaitra* a great religious festival is held.'[2] Again : Rāma 'was accordingly born during the Tretā Yuga on the ninth of the light half of the month of Chaitra (March-April) in the city of Ayodhyā, of Kausalyā wife of Rājā Daśaratha.'[3] And finally : 'Awadh (*Ayodhyā*) is one of the largest cities of India. It is situated in longitude 118,6', and latitude 27,22'. In ancient times its populous site covered an extent of 148 *kos* in length and 36 in breadth, and it is esteemed one of the holiest places of antiquity. It was the residence of Rāmachandra who in the Tretā age combined in his own person both the spiritual supremacy and kingly office.'[4] The author adds: 'At the distance of one *kos* from the city, the *Gogra,* after the junction with the Sai (*Sarju*) flows below the fort. Near the city stand two considerable tombs of six and seven yards in length respectively. The vulgar believe them to be the resting-places of Seth and the prophet Job, and extraordinary tales are related of them. Some say that at Ratnapur is the tomb of Kabīr, the assertor of the unity of God.'[5]

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meiṅ, p.141

[1] See Arun Shourie, 'Hideaway Communalism', *Hindu Temples*, Vol. I, pp. 1-11

[2] Abu 'l-Faḍl, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, Eng. tr., Vol. II, p.334

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p.182

[5] *Loc. cit.*

2 Chhatraman (i) Dās Kāyastha Rā'izādah, *Chihār Gulshan,* 1173 A.H./1759-60 A.D. Chhatraman (i) makes a similar observation: 'Oudh is an ancient city. In olden times, it had a populated area of 48 *kos* in length and 38 *kos* in breadth. They count it amongst important sanctuaries. Close to this city, there are two tombs seven yards long each. People describe these as the tombs of Seth and Job, relate tales, and sifting the ground obtain gold. It is the birth-place of Rājā Rāmachandra, who was one of the ten *Avatāra*-s, that is, a perfect manifestation of God. Sītā was married to him.[1]

3 *Jaipur State records*

i) *Catalogue of Historical Documents* in *Kapad Dwara, Jaipur:* No.2, Maps and Plans, lists at Serial No. 179 a map of Ayodhya, painted on white cotton fabric, early 18th century, size 213/178 cm., depicting important religious places, among which we find the 'Janmasthan' of Śrī Rāma. This is published.

ii) A reference to a *Chaknāma* of 2nd Rajab 1129 A.H./Ist June 1717 A.D.recording that 983 acres of land was granted by Aurangzīb in Oudh to Sawāī Rājā Jaisingh Kachhwāhā (1699-1743), ruler of Amer, founder of Jaipur in 1727 and a number of small townships called Jaisinghpurā-s at Kabul, Peshawar, Multan, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Mathura, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and other places, for a garden and *purā*, vide G.C.Verma, 'Jaisinghpura', *Proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress,* XI, 1978, pp.74-83.

Both these documents are preserved in the Kapad-Dwara collections of the City Palace Museum, Jaipur.[2] It is in the collection of documents relating to these places that the map of Ayodhya is preserved.

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[1] *'Oud shahr-ī 'st qadīm. Dar peshīn-i zamāṅ ba-ṭūl chihal-o hasht karoh wa 'arḍ sī-o hasht ābādī dāsht. Az guzīn-i mu'ābid shumurand. Nazdīk-i īṅ shahr do qabr-ī haft-gazī sākhtah and, mardum khwābgāh-i Shīth-o Ayyūb gūyand, wa afsānahā khwānand. Khāk-bīzī kardah ṭilā ba-dast ārand. Zādgāh-i Rāmchandar ki az jumlah dah autār ya'nī maẓhar-ī atm-i Īzdī 'st būdah. Sītā badū mansūb būd.'*
Chhatraman (i) Dās Rā'iẓādah Kāyastha, *Chihār Chaman,* p.58

[2] G.C.Verma, 'Jaisinghpura', *Proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress,* XI, 1978, p.76

4 *Revenue Records:* The first regular settlement report (1861) and later records confirm that these records are in continuation of the Summary Settlement (1858-1859) as well as of the records of the Nawwābī regime. Therein 'Janmasthān', a large complex, figures as a landmark in 'Kot Ramachandra'. In the first settlement report (1861), the entire complex of Janmasthān shown under *ābādī* (populated area) is covered under khasrā No. 163 with ten plots with superior ownership declared in the name of Sarkār Bahādur Nazūl and the Mahants of the Janmasthān have been shown with subordinate proprietary right (*mālikān-i mātaḥat*). The map of Ḥadbast of the village Kot Ramachandra appended to the Settlement Report (1861) shows only Janmasthān with no symbol of the mosque indicated anywhere on the plot in question. This position is maintained in three later Settlements (1301 F./1893 A.D., 1344 F./1939 A.D., 1397 F./1989 A.D.), with plot Nos. changed as per revenue practice. Even though the amended khasra records of Nazul Department (1931) under No. 580 put the mosque and the Chabutara temple in Waqf possession, Mahant Raghunath is declared as subsidiary proprietor of the entire plot. These records have not been followed, however, in the regular revenue settlements of 1936-37 and 1989-90.[1]

5 Maulawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Karīm's book in Persian written presumably in the beginning of the last century. Its enlarged Urdu version only is available, hence we relegate it to the 'Urdu sources'.

6 *Epigraphical sources:* The mosque bears three Persian inscriptions. One is a Persian inscription of 8 couplets carved in stone in relief in Naskh above the *chhajjā* on the central arch, *in situ*, as under:

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. And in Him is my trust. In the name of One who is wise and great, as abodeless and creator of all the universe.(1)

After His praise, blessings upon the Chosen One

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1. *History and Casuistry*, pp.23-24

(Prophet Muḥammad), as he is the prince of the prophets and best in the world. (2)
Bābar Qalandar (the wandering mendicant) has become a legend in the world, since in (his time the world has achieved prosperity. (3)
Even as the sky encompasses the earth, he holds sway over the seven lands. (4)
In his court there was a great noble, whose name is Mīr Bāqī, the second Āṣaf. (5)
He was councillor of his government and administrator of his kingdom, and is the builder of this mosque and fort. (6)
O God ! may he (Bābar) live for ever in this world, with crown, throne, fortune, and high spirits. (7)
The time of the construction is this auspicious date which is indicated by nine hundred thirtyfive (A.H.).(8)
Finishes this praise of God, of the Prophet, and of the King (Bābar). May Allāh illumine His proof. Written by the aged and feeble servant Fatḥu 'llāh Muḥammad Ghorī.[1]

Sher Singh's article, 'Who Built the Babari Masjid?',[2] contains a reproduction of the text of the colophon in original Togra style, the wording of which differs from that given by Maulavi M. Ashraf Hussain[1] and followed in translation above. According to Sher Singh[2] Francis-Hamilton Buchanan, whom we had occasion to notice earlier, was the first person to record 'the Persian and Arabic inscriptions inside the so-called Babari Masjid in 1813-14', procured by the author of the article. The text of the colophon given by him appears below :

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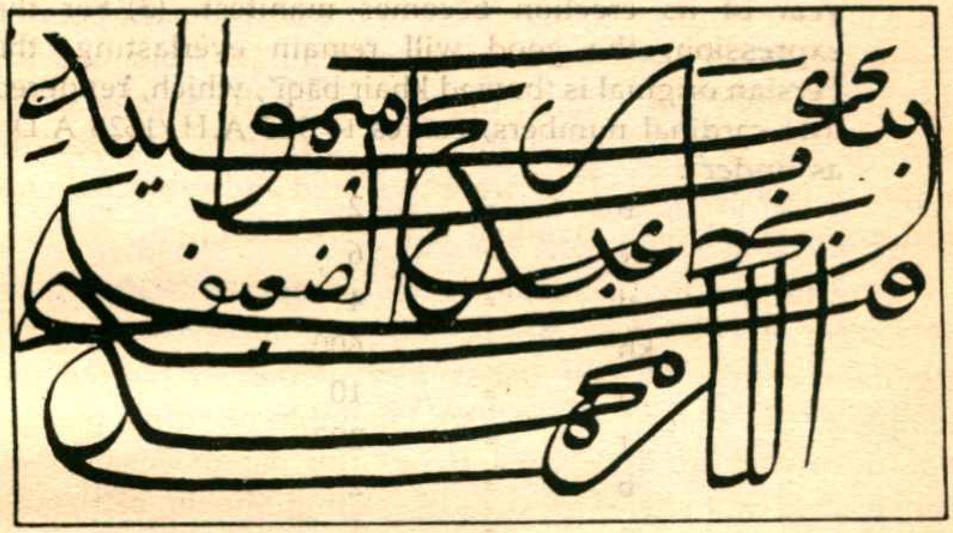
[1] *Bismi'llah-i 'r-Raḥmān-i 'r-Raḥīm wa Thiqatī*
Ba-nām-īaṅ-ki ū dānā 'st akbar
Ki khāliq-i jumlah 'ālam lā-makānī (1)
Durūd-ī Muṣṭafā ba'd az thanāya-sh
Ki sarwar-i anbiyā' zubdah jahānī (2)
Fasānah dar jahāṅ Bābar Qalandar
Ki shud dar dawr-i gītī kāmrānī (3)
Chunāṅ kash haft kishwar dar giriftah
Zamīṅ rā chūṅ mithāl-ī āsmānī (4)
Dar āṅ ḥaḍrat yak-ī Mīr-ī mu'azzam
Ki nāmash Mīr Bāqī Āṣaf thānī (5)
Mushīr-ī salṭanaṭ tadbīr-i mulkash
Ki 'z-īṅ masjid-o ḥiṣār-(ī) hast bānī (6)
Khudāyā! dar jahāṅ pā'indah bādā
Ki chatra-o takht-o bakht-o zindagānī (7)
Binā'-ī 'ahd-i 'z-īn tārīkh-i maymūṅ
Ki nuh ṣad sī panch buwad nishānī (8)
Tammat hādha at-tawḥīdu wa na 'tu wa madḥu wa ṣifatu. Rawwara 'llāh-o burhāna-hū. Khaṭṭa 'abdu 'ḍ-ḍa'īf-i naḥīf-i Fatḥu 'llāhi Muḥammadu Ghoriyy.

[2] Sher Singh, 'Who Built the Babri Masjid?', the *Daily Telegraph*, October 31, 1991



It is not easy to decipher it fully and to our entire satisfaction. Nevertheless, some have tried to decipher it like this: *Binā-i tārīkh-i maymūn 'alay-h-i ba-khaṭṭ-i 'Abdu 'l-Ḍa'īf Muḥammad Fathu'llāh*. Its first three words pose a problem, and the rest of them means 'from the pen of the aged/feeble servant Fatḥu'llāh Muḥammad Ghorī.' The rest of the article–author's construction etc. is based on poor knowledge of the language, hence we need not take further notice of the article.

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[1] Maulavi M. Ashraf Hussain's article in *Epigraphia Indica* (Arabic and Persian Supplement), 1965, pp.58-62

[2] Sher Singh, *op.cit.*

Now, there were two inscriptions inside the mosque, which were lost in a riot in 1934 and subsequently restored from some stampage alleged to have been preserved. The one which was originally there on the sourthern side of the pulpit reads as under :

By order of king Bābar whose justice is an edifice meeting the palace of the sky. (1)

This descending place of angels was built by the fortune-favoured noble Mīr Bāqī. (2)

The good will remain everlasting, and, when I utter the words, 'The good will remain everlasting', the year of its erection becomes manifest. (3)[1]For the expression, the good will remain everlasting, the Persian original is 'buwad khair bāqī', which, rendered into cardinal numbers, comes to 935 A.H./1528 A.D., as under :

b = 2
w = 6
d = 4
kh = 600
i = 10
r = 200
b = 2
a = 1
q = 100
i = 10
Total = 935

Muslim authors have invariably erred in dating the event as 923 or 930 A.H. instead of 935 A.H. The source of the error is a misreading of the date given above in the form of Arabic/Persian alphabets arranged into words, which are : *b u w a d kh a i r b a q i* . What they have done about it is to drop 'b u w a d' and read only the rest, *'khair baqi'*, which does give 923 A.H. Incidentally, the 'u', 'a', 'a', are, in Arabic/Persian, diacritical marks, which are not counted.

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[1] *Ba-farmūdāh-ī shāh-i Bābar ki 'adl-ash*
Binā'ī 'st bā kākh-i gardūṅ mulāqī (1)
Binā kardah īṅ mahbaṭ-i qudsiyān rā
Amīr-ī sa'ādat-nishāṅ Mīr-Bāqī (2)
Buwad khayr bāqī wa sāl-ī bināyash
'Ayāṅ shud chū guftaṁ, 'buwad khair bāqī' (3)

Well, the other constructed or reconstructed inscription reads as under :

In accordance of the wishes of the ruler of the world, Bābar, this lasting house (of God), like the palace of the spheres, was founded by the fortune-favoured noble Mīr Khān. (1-2)

May such a founder thereof ever remain, and such a king of the world and age. (3) [1]

7 *Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* (the Bahādurshāhī Book of Forty Sermons). Besides stating, as we shall see in the sequel, on the basis of old records (*kutub-i sābiqah*), that the Muslim rulers of the past used to demolish temples and break down idols at Ayodhya in pursuance of their policy of rooting out infidelity and that Bābar did replace the Rāma temple by the Bābarī mosque, Mirzā Jān, author of an Urdu work *Ḥadīqah-ī Shuhadā* and an active participant in the crescentade (*Jihād*) to recapture the Hanumāngaḍhī from the Hindus, harks back to a Persian text entitled *Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī*, ascribes it to the daughter (*beṭī*) of "Bahādurshāh 'Ālamgīr" (full name Bahādurshāh Shāh-i 'Ālam, here surnamed 'Ālamgīr either inadvertently or on the basis of his being Aurangzīb 'Ālamgīr's son), claims to have found a copy of the book made on 15th Sha'bān 1231 A.H./11th July 1816 A.D. in the library of Mirzā Ḥaydar Shukoh son of Mirzā Sulaymān Shukoh (son of Prince Dārā Shukoh), and quotes from it verbatim (*hū ba-hū*) a passage in original of some twelve lines setting out the twentyfifth out of forty sermons, to the effect that, keeping the triumph of Islam in view, devout Muslim rulers should keep all idolaters in subjection to Islam,

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[1] *Ba-manshā'i Bābar khadīv-i jahāṅ*
Basānī ki bā kākh-i gardūṅ 'ināṅ (1)
Binā kardah īṅ khānah-i pāyadār
Amīr-ī sa'ādat-nishāṅ Mīr Khāṅ (2)
Bi-māṅdah hamīshah chunīṅ bānī-ash
Chuāṅ shahryār-ī zamīn-o zamāṅ (3)

brook no laxity in realization of *Jizyah*, grant no exemption to Hindu Rājah-s from dancing attendance on 'Īd days and from waiting on foot outside mosques till the end of prayer (*namāz*) and discourse (*khuṭbah*), and 'keep in constant use for Friday and congregational prayer the mosques built up to strengthen Islam after demolishing the temples of the idolatrous Hindus situated at Mathura, Banaras, and Awadh etc., which the wretched infidels have, according to their faith, adjudged to be the birth-place of Kanhaiyā in one case, *Sītā Rasoī* in another, and Hanumān's abode in a third and claim that after conquest of Lanka Rāmchandra established him there. And, as has been stressed, idol-worship must not continue publicly, nor must the sound of bell reach Muslim ears.[1] It would be pertinent to point out that, as will be borne out by others, too, in the sequel, the mosque became better known as *Śitā kī Rasoī* mosque.[2] Mirzā Jān does not mention the name of Bahādurshāh's daughter (*Bahādurshāh 'Ālamgīr kī beṭī*), nor does he indicate the date of composition of her work. The king did have a daughter, Dahr Afroz Bānū

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[1] *'IBĀRATI NAṢĪḤAT-I BIST-O PANJUM AZ ṢAḤĪFAH-Ī CHIHAL NAṢĀ'IḤ-I BAHĀDURSHĀHĪ KI BA-TĀRĪKH-I PĀNZ̤DAHAM SHA'BĀN 1231 HIJRI NAQL SHUDAH DAR KUTUBKHĀNAH-Ī MIRZĀ ḤAYDAR SHUKOH IBN MIRZĀ SULAYMĀN SHUKOH DĀKHIL SHUD AZ KITĀB-I MADHKŪRAH NAQL KARDAH SHUD :*
"Bādshāhān ulu 'l -'azm rā lāzim ki... ghalabah-ī dīn-o Islām malḥūẓ dāshtah hamah mushrikān rā maṭī'-i Islām dārand, wa az akhdh-i jizyah ki bar kuffār-i fujjār ijrā' yāftah ast dar nah guzarand, wa jamī' rājgān rā az ḥukm-i iḥḍār-i roz-i 'īdayn wa piyādah istādah māṅdan bairūn-i masājid ki dar ma'mūlāh-i khud-hā ba-farmān-i bādshāhī sākhtah and tā inqiḍā -i namāz-o khuṭbah mu'āf nah dārand. Wa mu'ābid-hā-i mushrikīn-i Hunūd wāqi'-i Mathurā wa Banāras wa Awadh waghayrah rā ki kuffār-i nābakār ba-i'tiqād-i khud-hā jā'ī rā mawladgāh-i Kanhaiyā wa maqām-ī rā Rasoī-i Sītā wa makān-ī rā qarārgāh-i Hanumān qarār dādah and wa mī-gūyand ki ba'd fatḥ-i Laṅkā Rāmchandar Hanumān rā dar āṅ jā nishānīdah ast mismār gashtah barā'i taqwiyyat-i Islām dar āṅ hamah jā masājid ta'mīr shudah and, āṅ masājid rā az jum'ah-o jamā'at khālī nah dārand, chunāṅ-ki qadghan ast ki rasm-i butparastī ba-i'lān nah shawad wa ṣadā-i nāqus ba-gosh-i ahl-i Islām nah rasad."
Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī, quoted in Mirzā Jān, Ḥadīqah-i Shuhadā, p.6

[2] Kamālu 'd-Dīn Ḥaydar Ḥasaniyy-u 'l-Ḥusayniyy, *Qayṣaru 't-Tawārīkh*, otherwise known as *Tawārīkh-i Awadh*, Vol. II, p.117

Begum, who died at the age of forty at Kabul on January 25, 1703. But she is not likely to be the writer of the book, for the simple reason that the date of its composition cannot be supposed to be prior to 1707, when Aurangzīb died and was succeeded by his son Bahādurshāh. Had it been during Aurangzīb's reign, the book would have been titled after the name of Aurangzīb rather than of Bahādurshāh. According to the Foreign Department Political Consulations, December 28, 1855, No. 450, the Prime Minister of Wājid 'Alī Shāh 'referred to a book which existed in the King's library written in the reign of Bahadurshah about the year 1707 A.D. which contained an account of the masjid at Hanumangarhi.'[1] The Persian text under examination does contain, *inter alia*, an account of the mosque built at Hanumān's abode (later named Hanumāngaḍhī). In fact, while quoting the above passage from the work, Mirzā Jān prefaces it with a special mention of that mosque thus: 'In short, these four mosques [Bābarī mosque, Rām Darbār mosque, fort mosque, and Hanumāngaḍhī mosque] built by the rulers of the past were situated at Ayodhya like four pillars of the faith. And there is clear description thereof in the books of history, particularly (existence of) the Hanumāngaḍhī mosque is established by a passage of the Ṣaḥīfah-ī Shāhī (i.e. *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī*), which Bahādurshāh 'Ālamgīr's daughter has written [comprising] forty sermons....'[2] This creates a strong presumption in favour of the view that it is this book which the Prime Minister had in mind. Thus, the date of composition of the work transpires to be 1707 A.D. It means that Bahādurshāh had an elder daughter, too.

Now, Mirzā Jān is not the only medieval writer to refer to the work under consideration. While relating the tale of destruction of the Rāma temple, Mirza

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[1] G.D.Bhatnagar, *Awadh under Wajid 'Alī Shāh*, pp. 136-137

[2] *"Gharaḍ yeh chāroṅ masjideṅ banwā'ī hu'īṅ ṣalāṭin-i māḍiyyah kī chār arkān-i īmān kī ṭaraḥ Awadh meiṅ wāqi' thīṅ aur kutub-i tawārīkh meiṅ taṣrīḥ hai, khuṣūṣan Hanumāngaḍhī kī masjid 'i bārat-i Ṣaḥīfah-i Shāhī se ki Bahādur Shāh 'Ālamgīr kī beṭī ne Chihal Naṣā'iḥ likhī hai."*
Mirzā Jān, p.6

Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr, whom we shall have occasion to notice in the sequel, hints at his sources including this work thus: 'It has been dealt with in the books of history. And in the *Ṣaḥīfah-i Bahādurshāhī* it has come to be described in detail with reference to year and date. Whoever may choose may look into it.'[1] The concluding sentence of the excerpt seems to suggest that the work referred to therein under a shortened title was easily available during the first half of the last century, maybe in print.

If the *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* is extant anywhere in print or in manuscript, it needs to be traced out and salvaged without loss of time. My personal attempt in this bahalf, with the meagre resources at my disposal, has not yet borne fruit and I had to make do with furnishing to VHP and through them to AIBMAC only the passage quoted from it by Mirzā Jān. Mirzā Ḥaydar Shukoh's library must have come into the hands of the British after the 1857 turmoil and transferred to some other institution by them. It should not be so difficult for VHP to track it down.

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[1] Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr, *Fasānah-ī 'Ibrat*, p.121

4

LITERARY EVIDENCE : URDU SOURCES

There are over a dozen Urdu sources shedding light on the existence and demolition of the Rāma Janmabhūmi (Sitā Rasoī) temple and erection of the disputed mosque on its site by Bābar. Out of these I could lay my hands upon eleven, which are dealt with below :

1. Application dated November 30, 1858, filed by Muḥammad Aṣghar, Khaṭīb & Mu'adhhin, 'Bābarī Masjid', for initiation of judicial proceedings against the *'Bairāgīyān-i Janmasthān'*, calling the mosque *'masjid-i Janmasthān'* and the courtyard near the arch and the pulpit within the boundary of the mosque *'maqām Janmasthān kā'*. The Bairāgī-s had raised a platform in the courtyard which the applicant wanted dismantled. He mentions that the Janmasthān area had been lying unkempt/in disorder (*parīshān*) for hundreds of years and that the Hindus carried on worship there (*maqām Janmasthān kā ṣad-hā baras se parīshān parā rahtā thā. Ahl-i Hunūd pūjā karte the.*)[1]
   Well, if the mosque (once described by the applicant as 'masjid-ī Bābarī') is the Janmasthān mosque, its courtyard is the Janmasthān, and the Hindus had all along been carrying on their worship (and all that it implies) there, it can safely be presumed that there used to be some construction there as part of a (Janmasthān) temple, which came partly to be destroyed and partly converted into the existing mosque. And the Hindus had no alternative to making do with the templeless courtyard. It is indeed unthinkable that they might have been carrying on

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[1] Sayyid Ṣabāḥu 'd-Dīn 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān, *Bābarī Masjid*, pp. 29-30

worship without a proper temple at such a sacred place and for such a long time.

2. Lachhmī Nārāin Ṣadr Qānūngo, assisted by Munshī Mawlawiyy Hāshim, *Asrār-i Ḥaqīqat*, Lucknow, 1923, gives details about the replacement of the temple by the mosque.[1]
3. Muḥammad Najmu 'l-Ghanī Khān Rāmpurī, *Tārīkh-i Awadh*, Lucknow, 1919, Vol. V, says: 'At Ajodhya, where there stood the temple of Rāmchandra Jī's Janmasthān, there is Sītā Jī kī Rasoī adjacent to it, king Bābar got a magnnificent mosque built there, which is the *Jāmi' Masjid*, in 933 A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān, the date of which is *Khayr Bāqī* (923). Till date the mosque is called *Masjid-i Sītā kī Rasoī*. And that temple is extant by the side....Bābar got the mosque built after demolishing the *Janmasthān*, and used in his mosque the stone of the same *Janmasthān*, which was richly engraved, precious *kasauṭī* stone, and which survives even today.'[2]
4. Sayyid Kamālu 'd-Dīn Ḥaydar Ḥasanī-u 'l-Ḥusaynī-i 'l-Mashhadī, *Qayṣar-u 't-Tawārīkh*, otherwise known as *Tawārīkh-i Awadh*, Lucknow, 1896, Vol.II, locates the mosque in question in Sītā kī Rasoī temple (*jāmi' masjid jo Sītā kī Rasoī meiṅ hai*) (p.111) as well as'in the *Janmasthān*, namely the birthplace of Rāma son of Rājah Dasaratha, adjacent to the house of the Rasoī of Sītā wife of the said Rāma' (*masjid-i jāmi' binā-i Bābar bādshāh wāqi' Janmasthān ya'nī masqaṭ-i rās-i Rāma pisar-i rājah Daśaratha muttaṣil-i makān-i Rasoī-i Sītā wife of Rām-i madhkūr*) and acknowledges that all the temples of Ayodhya were turned into mosques by the Sulṭān-s of the past (*bādshāhān-i salf ne tamāmī mu'ābid-i Hunūd shahr-i Awadh meiṅ jahāṅ baḍe butkhāne the masjid-i jāmi' bajā-i butkhānahī mukhtaṣar banwā kar mu'dhdhin aur jārūb-kash muqarrar farmāyā*). (p.117)[3]

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[1] Lachmī Nārāin, assisted by Munshī Mawlawiyy Hāshim, *Asrār-i Ḥaqīqat*

[2] 'Allāmah Muḥammad Najmu 'l-Ghanī Khāṅ Rāmpūrī, *Tārīkh-i Awadh*, Vol.V, pp.200-201

[3] Sayyid Kamālu 'd-Dīns, II, pp. 110 ff

Here, it appears, some words are missing in print between *'jami'*, and *'baja-i'*. Obviously, what is meant to be said is that the Sulṭān-s replaced big temples by *jāmi' masjid*-s and small by small mosques. And this all is from a legal document dated July 1855 given by the author.

5. Haji Muḥammad Hasan, *Ḍiyā-i Akhtar*, Lucknow, 1878, says: 'Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān built a mosque after levelling down Rājah Rāmachandra's palace and Sītā's kitchen by order of Ẓahīru 'd-Dīn Bābar, king of Dihlī, in 923 A.H., and king Muḥiyy-u 'd-Dīn Aurangzīb 'Ālamgīr built another mosque at the same place.'[1]
6. Munshī Rām Sahāi Tamannā, *Afḍalu 't-Tawārīkh*, being the 2nd volume of his *Aḥsanu 't-Tawārīkh* in three volumes, Lucknow, 1879, describes Bābar's mosque as 'masjid-i Janmasthān' (*bāqī-māṅdgān ne masjid-i Janmasthān meiṅ panāh lī*). (p.110)[2]
7. *Muraqqah-i Khusrawī*, otherwise known as *Tawārīkh-i Awadh*, by Shaykh 'Azamat 'Alī Kākorawī Nāmī (1811-93), who happened to be an eye-witness to much that passed during king Wājid 'Alī Shāh's regime. The work was completed in 1869 but could see the light of day as late as 1986, short, however, of its section published separately and later, in 1987, under the title *Amīr 'Alī Shahīd aur Ma'rakah-i Hanumāngaḍhī*, which alone is germane to our enquiry, and the opening paragraph of which is reproduced here in translation, omitting very few details: 'According to old records, it has been a religious rule with Muslim rulers, after the triumph of Sayyid Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī, to build mosques, monasteries, and inns, spread Islam, and put a stop to blasphemous practices (*bid 'at*), wherever they found manifestation [of infidelity]. Accordingly, even as they cleared up Mathura, Bindraban, etc. from the rubbish of non-Islamic practices, the magnificent Bābarī mosque (*masjid-i sarbaland-i Bābarī*) came up in 923 A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Mūsā

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[1] Hājī Muḥammad Ḥasan, *Ḍiyā-i Akhtar*, pp.38-39

[2] Munshī Rām Sahāi Tamannā, *Afḍalu 't-Tawārikh*, being the second volume of his three-volume work, *Aḥsanu 't-Tawārīkh*, p.110

'Āshiqān in the *Janmasthān* temple (*butkhāne Janmasthān meiṅ*) in Faizabad-Awadh which was a great place [of idol-worship] and the capital of Rāma's father.'[1] Again: 'Among the Hindus it was known as *Sītā ki Rasoī*.'[2]

8. *Fasānah-i 'Ibrat*, written by Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr (1787-1867) in 1860 circa but published first in 1884. It says that 'a glorious sky-high mosque was built up during king Bābar's regime on the spot where *Sītā kī Rasoī* tomb (?) is situated, in Awadh. During this Bābarī [dispensation] the Hindus had no guts to be a match for the Muslims. [The mosque] was built in 923 A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Mīr 'Āshiqān....There [on the Hanumāngaḍhī] Aurangzīb constructed a mosque.... The Bairāgī-s effaced the mosque and erected a temple in its place. Then they intruded into the *'Masjid-i Bābarī'* where the *Sītā kī Rasoī* was situated.'[3] The author adds that 'formerly, it is Shaykh 'Alī Hazīṅ's observation which held good' and quotes his Persian couplet :

   Bi-bīṅ karāmat-ī butkhānah-ī marā ay Shaykh!
   Ki chūṅ kharāb shawad khānah-ī Khudā gardad

   Translation : 'O Shaykh! witness the miracle of my house of idols: When despoiled, it becomes a house of God (i.e. a mosque):' Purporting to mean that formerly temples were demolished for construction of mosques, Surūr laments that 'times have so changed that now the mosque was demolished for construction of a temple (on the Hanumāngaḍhī).'[4]

9. A work in Persian, written presumably in early last century, by a Muslim saint Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Karīm, who belonged to the line of Sayyid Mīr Mūsā 'Āshiqān at whose instance/under whose patronage Bābar is said to have ordered replacement of the temple by the mosque. It was translated into Urdu and probably enlarged by Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Ghaffār

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[1] Shaykh Muḥammad 'Azamat 'Alī Kākorawī Nāmī, *Amīr 'Alī Shahīd aur Ma'rakah-i Hanumāngaḍhī*, pp.9-10

[2] *Ibid.*, p.10

[3] Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr, *Fasānah-ī 'Ibrat*, pp. 121-122

[4] Ibid., p.122

under the title *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā Ya'nī Tārīkh-Pārīnah-ī Madīnatu 'l-Awliyā*, which saw the light of day at Ayodhya before 1932.[1] It was later published by the Nami Press, Lucknow, in 1979 and 1981. The first edition – and I have not seen the 1979 edition – carried an account of how Bābar decided and proceeded to demolish the Rāma temple and build the mosque on its site under the influence of Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān. But the entire account is conspicuous by its absence in at least the 1981 edition. I possess a xerox copy of the last, 1981 edition as well as page 40 only of an earlier edition. This page contains a reference to the *'Koṭ-i Rājah Rāmachandra Jī'* (Ramkot), *'makān-i paidā'ish'* (birth-site), and *'bāwarchīkhānah Rājah-ī mawṣūf kā'* (the said Rājā's kitchen), and adds: 'And now they call it *Janmasthān* and *Rasoī-i Sītā Jī*. Having demolished these structures, king Bābar got a majestic mosque constructed. The reason for the construction of this mosque will follow in the sequel.'[2] The tragic tale of vandalism and its subsequent details promised here have been totally excluded from the 1981 edition, if not from the 1979 edition also, which we have not been able to lay our hands on. The 1981 edition, too, however, contains certain relevant indications. According to it, for example, Bābar came all the way from Kabul to Awadh in disguise, donning the garb of a *faqīr*, *Qalandar* to be precise. Here he met Shāh Jalāl and Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān and took some pledge before these saints in lieu of their blessings to conquer Hindustan. The pledge has not been spelled out here, but it has been made plain that it is in pursuance of this pledge (*iqrār*) that he got the mosque raised after conquering this country.[3] It is obvious that construction of just a mosque of normal size and shape is nothing compared with the conquest of India to secure which Bābar had to undertake the arduous journey from Kabul to Ayodhya in disguise. We may, therefore, take it for granted that demolition of the Rāma temple did form part of the pledge.

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[1] Cp. Avadh-Vāsī Lālā Sītā Rām, *Ayodhyā kā Itihāsa*, p.3

[2] Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Ghaffār, *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā Ya'nī Tārīkh-i Pārīnah-i Madīnatu 'l-Aliyā*, some older edition.

[3] *Ibid.*, Lucknow, 1981, pp. 61-62

The information contained in Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Karīm's book is so germane to our enquiry and so pregnant with implications that I consider it necessary to discuss its relevant text in full. The author says : 'When a boy, Sulṭān Bābar, who belonged to the family of Tīmūr, came from Kabul to the town of Awadh in disguise, donning the garb of an ascetic. Those days, the town of Awadh was under the Sultanate of Sikandar Lodī and the place was a (second) capital of the Sultanate. Sultān Bābar paid a reverential visit to His Holiness Shāh Jalāl and Sire Mūsa 'Āshiqān and solicited occult favour from them, so that the ancestral Sultanate of Hindustan might come into his hands thanks to the blessings of those saints. Prince Bābar took leave of those personages, went to Kabul, mustered an army, brought it to Hindustan, and fought with Sulṭān Sikandar Lodhī (sic) at the (battle) field of Panipat...'[1] A little later the author adds : 'Accordingly, in fulfilment of the pledge king Bābar had taken before those saints, Bābar appointed Mīr Baqī to it and got a magnificent mosque constructed....'[2] Here the pledge taken by Bābar has not been specified. Avadh-vāsī Lālā Sītā Rām uses the original edition of the work, from which it appears that the latest edition leaves out the saints' reaction to Bābar's request, which is to this effect:

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[1] *"Sultān Bābar kī jo Amīr Tīmūr kī nasl se apne bachpan ke zamānah meiṅ khufiyyah ṭawr par libāṣ tabdīl kar ke faqīroṅ ki ṭaraḥ Kābul se shahr-i Awadh meiṅ āyā. Us waqt shahr-i Awadh meiṅ Sikander Lodhī kī salṭanat thī aur maqām salṭanat kā ek ṣadr maqām thā. Sulṭān Bābar ne shāh Jalāl Ṣāḥib qadasah ṣirru-hū aur Ḥaḍrat Mūsā 'Āshiqān kī khidmat meiṅ ḥāḍir ho kar bāṭinī imdād ṭalab kī, ki in buzurgoṅ kī du'ā se ābā'ī salṭanat-i Hindustān un ke hāth ā-jā'i. Shāhzādah Bābar in aṣḥāb se rukhṣat ho kar Kābul gayā aur wahāṅ fauj muhayyā kar ke Hindustān kī ṭaraf lāye aur Pānīpat ke maqām par Sulṭān Sikandar Lodhī se laḍe...." Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā Ya'nī Tārikh-i Pārīnah-i Madīnatu 'l-Awliyā'* (Lucknow, 1981), p.61

[2] *"Chunānche Bābar bādshāh ne jo iqrār un buzurgoṅ ke rū ba-rū kiyā thā Mīr Bāqī ko us kām par muqarrar farmā kar ek 'ālīshān masjid...ta'mīr karā'ī." Ibid.*, p.62

'The faqīr-s answered that they would bless him if he promised to build a mosque after demolishing the *Janmasthān* temple. Bābar accepted the faqirs' offer and returned to his homeland.'[1]

This anecdote lights up an unsuspected corner of Bābar's career, not reflected in his memoirs. Yet it receives confirmation from 'Abdu 'llāh's *Tārīkh-i Dā'ūdī* which contains a remarkable account of 'Bābar Qalandar's meeting with Sulṭān Sikandar Lodī. Writes 'Abdu 'llāh: 'In one of the histories it has come to notice that in those very days Bābar Bādshāh, whose name was Bābar Qalandar, came to Dihlī adorning himself with the garb of an ascetic and entered the royal palace. One of the courtiers brought it to the royal ears that a *qalandar* from among sages is standing in the court feasting on the elegance of the Sulṭān. Sulṭān Sikandar bade some of his courtiers bring him in. When Bābar Qalandar emerged from the door, he immediately shook hands with the Sulṭān, by the Sulṭān taking his hand into his inferred the greatness of fortune in the Sulṭān's hand, and felt in his heart that the affluence of his Sultanate was still abundant. Sulṭān Sikandar asked him, "With what are faqīr-s exalted?" Bābar Qalandar said, "With Qalandar-hood." The Sulṭān uttered this couplet extempore (rather sardonically) :

Hazār nuktah-i bārīk-tar 'zi mū īṅ-jā 'st
Na har ki sar ba-tarāshad qalandarī dānad

(Translation : 'Here there are thousand finesses finer than the hair. Not everyone with shaven head knows *qalandar*-hood.') Bābar Qalandar glanced at the Sulṭān with the feeling of being humbled and uttered this couplet:

Na har kasī ki kulah kaj nihād-o tund nashist
kulāh-dārī-o ā'īn-i sarwarī dānad

(Translation : 'Not everyone who puts on awry cap and sits tight knows cap-wearing and the way of kingship.')[1] The Sulṭān was pleased at this and asked his courtiers to take due care of board and lodging of the *faqīr*-s including Bābar Qalandar, but the latter had left the very first day. The Sulṭān began to squeeze his hands in repentance and remarked that *Humā* (a bird of paradise whose shadow makes one king) had fallen into his hand.[2]

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[1] *"Faqīroṅ ne uttara diyā ki tum Janmasthān ke mandir ko toḍ kar masjid banwāne kī pratijña karo to ham tumhāre liye du'ā karaiṅ. Bābar ne faqīroṅ kī bāt mān lī aur apne desh ko lauṭ gayā."* Awadh-Vāsī Lālā Sītā Rām, *Ayodhyā kā Itihāsa*, p.151

It is interesting to note that Bābar is mentioned as 'Bābar Qalandar' in one of the inscriptions of the Bābarī mosque already quoted by us:

Fasānah dar jahāṅ Bābar Qalandar
Ki shud dar dawr-i gītī kāmrānī

Bābar's sobriquet 'Qalandar' is confirmed by his daughter Gulbadan Begum, who remarks that the sobriquet was given to him by the people.[3] In fact, Bābar himself appears to be responsible for it, none else whould have dared to call him so. Abu 'l-Faḍl quotes a quatrain of Bābar which reads as under :[4]

Darwīshāṅ rā 'gar-cheh na az khwīshānam
Laik az dil-o jāṅ mu'taqid-ī īshānam
Dūr ast ma-gū-i shāhī az darwīshī
Shāh īm walī bandah-ī darwīshānam

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[1] *"Dar yake az tārīkh-hā ba-nazar dar āmadah ki ham dar īṅ roz-hā Bābar bādshāh ki nāmash Bābar Qalandar-ī būd khud ra ba-libās-i qlandarī ārāstah ba-Dihlī amad wa ba-bārgāh-i Sulṭān (Sikandar Lodī) dar āmad. Jam'-ī az muqarrabān ba-'arḍ rasānīdand ki qalandar-ī az ahl-i ma'rifat ba-darbār īstādah ba nazzārah-ī jamāl-i Sulṭān ast. Sulṭān Sikandar ba-muqarrabān-i chand ḥukm farmūdand ki ba-durūn ārand. Chūṅ Bābar Qalandar az dar dar-āmad, fi 'l-ḥāl ba-Sulṭān muṣāfaḥah kard, ba-mujarrad dast-giriftan girānī-i iqbāl dar dast-i Sulṭān daryāft, ba-khāṭir āwurd ki hanūz farr-i salṭana'-i ū farāwān ast. Sulṭān Sikandar pursīd, 'Darwīshāṅ ba-cheh musharraf and?' Bābar Qalandar guft, 'Ba-qalandarī.' Sulṭān bar badīh īṅ bait khwāṅd:*
Hazār muktah-i bārīktar 'zi mū īṅ jā 'st
Nah har ki sar ba-tarāshad qalandarī dānad
Bābar Qalandar az rū'i ghayrat jānib-i Sulṭān nigāh numūdah īṅ bait khwāṅd:
Nah har kas-ī ki kulah kaj nihād-o tund nashist
Kulāhdārī-o ā'īn-i sarwarī dānad
'Abdullāh, *Tārīkh-i Dāwūdī*, p.63

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64

[3] Gulbadan Begum, *Humāyūṅ-Nāmah*, 1903, p.12

[4] Abu 'l-Faḍl, *Akbar-Nāmah*, Vol. I, Allahabad, n.d., p.137

Translation : 'Though I do not belong to the fraternity of *darwīsh*-es, yet I am their follower with heart and soul. Say not kingship is a far cry from *darwīsh*-hood. I am a king but yet a slave of *darwīsh*-es.') It would be pertinent to point out that Firishtah accounts for Bābar's reputation as a *qalandar* thus: 'Whatever the monarch had amassed over long years, (he) spent out in one sitting, (whereby) the reason of his reputation as a *qalandar* became known to the world.' (*Āṅ-cheh bādshāhān ba-sālhā-i darāz andokhtah būdand dar yak majlis ṣarf numūdah wajh-i shuhrat-i āṅ-ḥaḍrat ba-qalandarī ma'lūm-i 'ālamiyyān gasht.*)[1]
Well, yet another version of how Bābar was led to destroy the Rāma temple and erect the existing structure on its site is that he visited Musā 'Āshiqān during his stay at Ayodhya in 1528 itself. The *faqīr* asked him to demolish the temple and erect a mosque on its site. Bābar was hesitant at first but succumbed to the *faqīr's* wishes on pain of being cursed by the latter.[2]

10. Niẓāmu 'd-Dawlah's statement in the *Awadh Akhbār*, 1876, confirming the temple demolition and erection of the mosque in its stead. Niẓāmu 'd-Dawlah, was the Kashmir ambassador to the court of Awadh, according to whom there did stand a temple of Mahārājah Rāmchandra's birth (*Mahārājah Rāmchandra ke tawallud kā mandir*), testified to by Bābar Shāh's constructing the mosque on the same site (*maqām-i tawallud kā thubūt to isī jagah par Bābar Shāh ke masjid banāne par hotā hai*), while according to the Hindus this sign of birth has been extant for lakhs of years and appears to be so (*jab-ki ba-qawl Hunūd ke lākhoṅ baras kā yah nishān-i tawallud bāqī hai aur ma'lūm hotā hai*).[3]

11. Mirzā Jān, *Hadīqah-i Shuhadā*, Lucknow, 1856.[4] Mirza Jān was an eyewitness as well as active participant in the Crescentade (*Jihād*) led by Amīr 'Alī Ameṭhawī

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[1] *Tārīkh-i Firishtah*, Nawalkishore Press, Lucknow, p.206
[2] Avadh-Vāsī Lālā Sītā Rām, *Ayodhyā kā Itihāsa*, p.150
[3] *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā* etc., p.20
[4] Mirzā Jān, *Ḥadīqah-i Shuhadā*, pp.4-5

during Wājid 'Alī Shāh's regime in 1855 for recapture of Hanumāngaḍhī (a few hundred yards from the Bābarī mosque) from the Hindus. The fight spread to the Bābarī mosque, which came into repossession of the Hindus for a while, it seems. From a private letter of the Governor-General, Coonoor, October 6, 1855, it appears that the work was banned immediately as one of the 'most inflammatory pamphlets on the Mussulman side...being circulated throughout the country, notwithstanding the seizure of them wherever they can be found...'under the Governor-General's ordinances.[1] Does it still lie in anyone's mouth to assert that the temple story is a creation of the British with a view to setting Hindus and Muslims against each other?

Mirza Jān writes: 'From old records and the tradition it is gathered...that, after the triumph of Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī, wherever in the territory of heaven-like Hindustan they found magnificent Hindu temples, the Muslim rulers of the past constructed mosques, monasteries, and inns, greatly spread Muḥammadanism by appointing mu'adhdhin-s (callers), teachers, care-takers, devastated the paraphernalia of idolatry and bell-ringing, gave grace and glamour to Islam, and vanquished the army of infidels. And this to such an extent that all over Hindustan no trace of infidelity was left besides Islam and no practice of idol-worship suvived besides worship of God. And the few Hindus who remained safe from the hands of the Muslims became the slaves of Islam, began to pay *kharāj*, became subdued and subjects all.... In short, even as the Muslim rulers cleared up Mathura, Banaras, etc. from the dust and dross of infidelity, they cleared up Faizabad and Awadh also from the filth of false belief, inasmuch as it is a great place of worship and was the capital of

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[1] J.G.A.Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Edinburgh, 1911, p.357

> Rāma's father. Here they broke the temples and left no stone–hearted idol intact. Where there was a big temple, there they got a big mosque constructed, and, where there was a small pavilion, there they erected a plain camp mosque/enclosure. Accordingly, what a majestic mosque Bābar Shāh has got constructed in 923 A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān ! Its date is "*Khayr Bāqī*".'[1] It is still known far and wide as the *Sītā kī Rasoī* mosque.'[2]

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[1] Mirzā Jān, pp.4-5

[2] *Ibid.*, p.5

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LITERARY EVIDENCE: AN EVALUATION

We have seen that the castle of Rāma called Ramkot is known to the *Bhuśuṇḍi-Rāmāyaṇa* (16th century) as the *Ayodhyā-koṭa* guarded by Hanumān, Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa; that *Rāma Janma Bhūmi* or *Janmasthāna* is well known to the *Ayodhyā-Māhātmya* (14th century); that the *Avadh-Vilāsa Mahākāvya* (17th century) and the Jaipur state records (17th century) follow suit; and that the Rāma temple is well known to the *Badarikāśrama-Māhātmya* (not later than the *Ayodhyā-Māhātmya*) under the name *'Rāmālaya'* (temple of Rāma).

Likewise, the present Ayodhya is well known to Al-Bīrūnī (360 A.H./970-71 A.D.). Abu 'l-Faḍl knows Ayodhya to be the birth-place of Rāma, the latter's spiritual supremacy, and the great religious festival *Rāmanavamī*.

The Bābarī mosque inscriptions describe the structure as built by Mīr Bāqī/Mīr Khāṅ. Two of these say it was built by him on the orders of Bābar or according to the wishes of Bābar. This Mīr Bāqī is mentioned by Bābar himself as his governor of Ayodhya.[1]

The Urdu sources quoted in this work agree that Bābar ordered destruction of the Rāma temple and construction of the mosque on its site at the instance of Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān. Professor A.R.Khan doubts the Sayyid's historicity. He contends that 'two of my research scholars (Dr. Yograj Malhotra and Tej Ram) and I have worked out the biographies from the contemporary and near-contemporary sources of all the persons in Bābur's service. No person by the name of

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[1] *Bābur-Nāma*, A.S.Beveridge, tr., Vol. II, p.679

Mūsā 'Āshiqān or Sayyid Mīr 'Āshiqān under whose "patronage" the mosque in question was supposed to have been built is traceable in Bābur's times.'[1] The learned professor is too solicitous about contemporaneity of evidence. Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Karīm (1235 A.H./ 1820A.D.-1308 A.H./1891 A.D.), author of the *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā Ya'nī Tārīkh-i Pārīnah-i Madīnatu 'l-Awliyā* (original, Persian version), refers to one Sayyid Sulṭān 'Alī alias Sayyid Sulṭān Bakhsh whom he knew personally and as belonging to the line of Sayyid Mūsā 'Āshiqān.[2] Now, it appears that Bābar's vandalism at Ayodhya was a passing episode, like the invasion of Alexander, for it was totally forgotten not only by the Hindus but also by Muslim authors and foreign travellers for some 275 years. Let alone Abu 'l-Faḍi and Sujān Rāi Bhanḍarī, author of the *Khulāṣatu 't-Tawārīkh* (completed in 1695-96), even William Finch, who visited Ayodhya during 1608-11, makes no mention of the mosque, even though he describes Ayodhya including Ramkot at some length. He is aware of the popular belief in the *Avatāra*-hood of Rāma and his birth-place in the ruins of Ramkot, and describes these ruins as an abode of *Paṇḍā*-s. He observes, 'In these ruines remayne certaine Bramenes, who record the names of all such Indians as wash themselves in the river running thereby.' He does not miss 'a cave of his with a narrow entrance, but so spacious and full of turnings within that a man may well loose himselfe there if he takes not better heed; where it is thought his ashes were buried. Hither resort many from all parts of India, which carry from thence in remembrance certain granes of rice as blacke as gun-powder which they say have been reserved ever since.' The cave is said to be 'some two miles on the further side of the river'.

From Finch's account, we gather the following significant points :

1. Rāma was born at Ramkot as an incarnation of God, according to popular belief.

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[1] *The Indian Express*, March 17, 1990

[2] *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhyā* etc., p.9

2. The 'castle and houses' believed to be connected with Rāma were in ruins.
3. The ruins were inhabited by some *Paṇḍā*-s.
4. There was a river running thereby.
5. Apparently, Finch found neither the mosque nor Muslims at Ramkot.
6. Hence, it appears, the Bābarī mosque must then be lying deserted and in ruins and the Hindus, though in possession thereof, could not have rebuilt the temple till then.
7. It may be one reason why Abu 'l-Faḍl mentions neither the temple nor the mosque.
8. People from all parts of India had been thronging from time immemorial to Ayodhya.

Joseph Tieffenthaler (1766-71) and Francis Hamilton Buchanan (1807-14) report that opinions of people at large are divided as to who destroyed the Ramkot castle or temple: some say it was Bābar and others say it was Aurangzīb. The position appears to be that both were right to some extent. The Hindu appears to have nullified Bābar's vandalism and succeeded in taking possession of the structure which must have been seriously damaged in the encounter. And it was Aurangzīb who might have remodelled the structure so as to turn in into a mosque, barring, however, conversion of its corbelled ceilings into domes and their finials which appears to have been effected after 1717, the date of the map of Ayodhya found at Jaipur. This view is reinforced by the following considerations.

1. Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī, Aurangzīb's chief secretary (*munshī-u 'l-munāshī*), wrote his *Khulāsatu 't-Tawārīkh* in 1695-96. Therein he mentions the replacement of the Keshava Rai Temple at Mathura on the orders of 'Ālamgīr Aurangzīb[1] but is silent about the similar incident at Ayodhya, although he does deal with Ayodhya and calls it the birth-place of Rāma. It appears that Aurangzīb had not tampered with the Ayodhya shrine till then, and it would have been quite

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[1] Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī, *Khulāṣatu 't-Tawārīkh*, p.42

impolitic on the part of Aurangzīb's chief secretary to refer to the shrine which had slipped out of Muslim hands. It was enough of him to have given the story of Rāma and remarked, 'As this city was the residence of king Rāmchand, it is held to be one of the holiest places.'[1] It goes without saying that such a holy place of the Hindus could not have been without a temple of Rāma on whose account it was considered holy.

2. In an earlier chapter we have seen that the map of Ayodhya *Janmasthān* found in Kapad-Dwar Collection of the City Palace Museum, Jaipur, shows that, in 1717, the superstructure comprised of three *Śikhara*-s (temple-spires) had no domes but only corbelled ceilings originally, in all probability, and that the domes and their finials belong to the 18th century.[2] And Aurangzīb died in 1707.
3. As we have already seen, the first reference to the replacement of the temple by the mosque occurs in the *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* (circa 1707).

A question is sometimes raised, which is that the inscriptions of the Bābarī mosque make no mention of the destruction of the Rāma temple. True, but so do the inscriptions on other Bābarī mosques. There are as many as ten Bābarī mosques, which have been studied by Prof. R.Nath:[3]

1. The Sambhal mosque in the Maḥallah Kot built on the site of a temple called Hari Mandir with temple pillars, inscriptionally by Mīr Hindū Beg on the orders of Bābar in 933 A.H./1526 A.D. The chain for hanging the temple bell, a passage at the back for wheeling round (*parikramā*), and a tank for ablution are still there.
2. The Kābulī Bāgh mosque at Panipat built by order of Bābar in 934 A.H./1527-28 A.D.to 935 A.H./1528 A.D. according to the three inscriptions on it read together.
3. The mosque at Agra on the left bank of the Jamuna

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[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] See also R.Nath, *Architecture & Site of the Baburi Masjid of Ayodhya*, pp.8-12. Also see Appendix II

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-24

in the close vicinity of Bābar's Bāgh-i Zar-Afshāṅ near the tomb of I'timādu 'd-Dawlah. It has no inscription and has been renovated beyond recognition.

4. Masjid-i Khurd in the Rohtak Fort built, according to the inscription therein, on the outer archway by Ghiyāthu 'd-Dīn Tughluq and, according to another not *in situ*, by Qāḍī Ḥammād during the reign of Bābar.
5. Rājpūtoṅ kī Masjid at Rohtak, the inscription of which is not *in situ*, belonged originally to the mausoleum of Masnad-i 'Alī Fīrūz Khāṅ and according to which the mosque was completed in 934 A.H./1527-8 A.D. during Bābar's reign.
6. The Ghaḍanfar kī Masjid at Palam near Delhi built by Ghaḍanfar during Bābar's reign in 935 A.H./1528 A.D., according to two inscriptions on it.
7. The Jāmi' Masjid at Pilkhuwa/Pilakhna near Aligarh built by Ghūran bin Muḥammad during the reign of Bābar in 935 A.H.
8. The Pīrzādah kī Masjid at Maham, 30 km. north-east of Rohtak, built by Khān Yūsuf Āghā during Bābar's reign in 936 A.H./1529 A.D., according to one of its two inscriptions.
9. The Shaykh-zādoṅ kī Masjid at Sonepat, the inscription of which is not *in situ* and originally belonged to a tomb of 'Alī Khān and records the date of the tomb as 937 A.H./1530 A.D.
10. The Bābarī Mosque at Ayodhya

Bābar makes no mention of any of these mosques, nor does he mention having built any mosque at Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, or Gwalior, which he describes at length and where he founded his *bāolī*-s, gardens, and palatial mansions. He mentions only one mosque, that at Dholpur, no longer extant, as having been built by him. There is nothing strange, therefore, if Ayodhya inscriptions are silent on the incident of replacement of the temple.

This account disposes of part of the question why Bābar does not mention the fact of the replacement in his memoirs.

The full answer consists in the patent fact that the memoirs entitled Tuzuk-i Bābarī in the Turkish original and *Bābarnāmah* in Persian translation by 'Abdu 'r-Raḥīm Khān-i Khānān for the period April 3 to September 17, 1528, have been missing perhaps since Bābar's own time, with the result that they could not find place even in the Persian translation.[1] From the *Bābarnāmah* it appears that Bābar reached Awadh or thereabout after March 28, 1528, and went out a - hunting in its vicinity on April 2, 1528.[2]

Tieffenthaler (1766-71) is the first to mention that the inner compound of the Bābarī mosque at Ayodhya has a *Vedī* (crib), on which the Hindus have installed their idols for worship. This they, in all probability, had to do when their entry to the mosque was continually obstructed by the Muslims. The *Vedī* or *Chabūtarāh* also appears in the Jaipur map of Ayodhya, vide Appendix II. Later, first king Wajid 'Ali Shāh and then the British divided the structure from the *Vedī* by putting up a railing. Hence, it appears, it was during Aurangzīb's reign that the Hindus lost possession of the structure. Earlier, they had easy access to the *sanctum sanctorum*. It also appears, from the statements of Carnegy (1870), *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh* (1877), etc., that prior to the putting up of the railing, both the Hindus and Muslims alike worshippped in the mosque-temple. This is highly significant. The Hindus seldom lost possession of the temple-mosque before the advent of the British. Questioning the authenticity of the Persian text, *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* used by us, Professors R.S.Sharma, M.A.Aṭhar 'Alī, D.N.Jha, and Suraj Bhan observe: 'No work by a daughter of Bahadur Shah or bearing the title *Sahifah-i Chihal Nasa'ih-i Bahadur Shahi* is known to exist in any collection anywhere in the world. One fails to locate it in C.A. Storey's *Persian Literature–a bio-bibliographical survey*, or D.N. Marshall's comprehensive *Mughals in India–a Bibliographical Survey*, Vol. I: Manuscripts. It is very likely, therefore that the work or the passage was a figment of Mirza Jan's imagination.'[1] Is it not more likely that, not being compiled by omniscient beings, the surveys relied upon by the Professors are incomplete to the extent that they do not cover the Persian text in question. Indeed, it did not occur to these renowned historianns that no survey of manuscripts can be complete enough to rule out the possibility of further additions. Discovery of manuscripts in every ancient language is a continuing process, which no survey can cry a halt to.

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[1] *Babur-Nama*, Vol. II, pp. 603-604

[2] *Ibid.*, p.602

Instead of making efforts to hunt out the full text of the work, these historians are making a fun of the reference to it by a medieval author without establishing any ulterior motive or extraneous consideration on his part. They appear to be pathetically oblivious of the fact that the emphasis on the displacement of the Rāma temple by the Bābarī mosque was bound to prejudice the Muslim case before the then king of Oudh (Wājid 'Alī Shāh) and the British Resident. The Hanumāngaḍhī mosque-temple dispute is an instance in point, which they would do well to study before imputing motive to Mirzā J̣ān. The Muslims had to strain every nerve to establish, unsuccessfully though, the existence of a mosque there allegedly destroyed by the Bairāgī-s to found a temple on its site.[2] Their interests would have been better served had they made out a case against the vandalism of Bābar, as is being sought to be done by the self-styled secularists and Muslim leaders today.

The document was first noticed and brought to light by the present writer. The right, historian - like course for the Professors would have been to pursue the matter in a non-partisan spirit, locate the institution housing the library of Mirzā Ḥaydar Shukoh, and enlighten the nation riven by the Ayodhya temple-mosque dispute on the evidentiary value of the Persian text and of course of other texts, and thereby save the nation from being divided against itself. The

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1. See *Ramjanmabhumi-Baburi Masjid: A Historians' Report to the Nation*, submitted to the Home Ministry by Professors R.S.Sharma, M.Aṭhar 'Alī, D.N. Jha, and Suraj Bhan
2. Mirzā Jān, passim

Professors should rather feel obliged to those who have discovered so much despite the indifference and rather non-cooperative attitude of the 'secular' and Muslim-communal forces.

As a matter of fact, the role of a historian is not only that of a judge, whose duty ends with his judgement on the merits and demerits of the case brought before him, but also of a detective, whose duty begins with the discovery of even a trace of evidence of some significant historical fact.

It must also be borne in mind in this connexion that the Muslim authors examined by us in this chapter claim generally to derive their information not from just heresay but also from past records (*kutub-i sābiqah*) and histories (*tawārīkh*). Najmu 'l-Ghanī Khāṅ Rāmpūrī claims to have drawn his material from eightyone sources, including published and unpublished records.[1]

As regards the *Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī*, it is noteworthy that, as already pointed out, it finds mention not only in Mirzā Jān but also in Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr. In fact, it appears, the text was easily available those days, for Surūr invites anybody and everybody to look into it and be satisfied. Therefore, it could not have been a fabrication of Mirzā Jān, or the brain-wave of his crafty mind.

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[1] 'Allāmah Najmu 'l-Ghanī Khāṅ Rāmpūrī, *Tā.'īkh-i Awadh*, Vol.I

6

ARCHITECTURAL, ART-HISTORICAL, AND EPIGRAPHICAL FINDINGS

The Bābarī mosque contains at least 14 pillars of 5′ each and of black stone of the family of schistose stone polished to look like Kasauṭī stone/touch-stone, bearing stylized designs of *kīrtimukha* and *lahara-vallarī*. 'These pillars', writes Professor R. Nath, 'did not support the main load of the celing which was passed down to the main columns of the ground floor, but only carried the lintels of the openning extensions.'[1] Their bases (piers) are 'extra thick and massive and in fact they are taking the load of the superstructure.'[2] The pillars carved at the base with a sacred water-pitcher called *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* or *kalaśa*. In one example a *deva-kannyā* is standing on a lotus flower and another she is replaced with a *haṁsa*. 'From this Kalash, sometimes a decorative lotus rises upon one of the octagonal facets of a pillar a female figure, standing in tribhanga mudra, still visible, although it is found heavily multilated by the iconolcasts.'[3] Again, 'On all the four corners of the base of a column we see load-carrying or bharavahaka Yakshas, sitting with hands down. These are semi-divine beings in human form shown supporting the kumbhas or vessels out of which the shaft of the pillar is shown rising.'[4] The door-jamb is of the same stone, i.e. schistose. At its base there is a standing male figure, wearing a *Kāraṇḍa-mukuṭa* on the head and a *vanamālā* on the bare front body. The right hand is in *vyākhyāna-mudrā* and the left is carrying a *triśūla*. 'Above the niche are the two vertical bands of decoration,

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1. R.Nath, p.10
2. *Ibid.*, p.12
3. *Evidence for the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir*, presented to the Government of India by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Annexure 28

Loc.cit.

the right one shows the rising creeper motif. The left one contains three figures of devakanyas or apsaras, i.e., nymphs or heavenly female beings, alternating on top with gana i.e., demi-divine male in the dancing pose. These are arranged one above the other, the uppermost figure is in fact a salabhanjika i.e. a female (nymph) figure holding and bending the branch of a blossming tree. The other apsaras are also shown standing in simple niches.'[1] These pillars appear to have been carved in the 11th century A.D., in 'late *Pratihār*' or '*Gāhaḍavāl*' style.

Needless to emphasize that these pillars belong to an old Hindu temple. The question of their belonging to Buddhism simply does not arise, for the simple reason that in that period no Buddhist temple was built without any clear Buddhistic motif.

We may recall that in the Janmasthān map of 1717 A.D. (Vide Appendix II, read with Appendix III) found in Kapad-Dwar , Jaipur, there are no domes at all. The superstructure is composed of three *Śikhara*-s (pyramidal, curvilinear temple-spires) with presumably corbelled ceilings. The domes and their finials appear to belong to a period later than 1717 A.D. 'Like the domes,' says Prof. R.Nath, 'their *mahāpadma* and *kalaśa* too are not original and these appears to have been restored in the 18th century or later. Musallas which have been marked in the floor of the mosque too is an 18th century addition.'[2] He is also of the opinion that 'If the pier and the ceilings are opened, there is likelihood of discovery of sculptures of Hindu divinities and *devanganas*.'[3]

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1. *Loc. cit.*
2. R.Nath, p.72
3. *Loc. cit.*

7

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

Alexander Cunningham conducted excavations at some Buddhist places in Ayodhya in the last century. Professor A.K.Narain excavated Ayodhya by laying three trenches at three different sites considerably away from the disputed temple-mosque in 1969 and 1970. Later, from 1975 to 1980, Professor B.B.Lal, a former Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, laid fourteen trenches at Ayodhya including one at the disputed site as part, however, of a large Central Government project, 'Archaeology of the Ramayana Sites'. The relevant data yielded by the seventeen trenches are:

1. There had been continuous human habitation in the area of the disputed structure from 700 B.C. to 300 A.D.
2. In a trench in the south of the structure, parallel rows of brick-bases–short, rectangular, pillar-like structures of burnt brick, each about three feet tall – have been found and are ascribable to the fourteenth-sixteenth century A.D. The directional alignment of the bases is the same as that of the several pillars of black stone found in the mosque. The bases were found hardly half a metre below the surface and appear to be meant to support the temple-mosque pillars.
3. A well laid thick floor, made of pinkish white chunam or like and of small kankars was found running over and across a base, and even beyond the excavated area, towards the disputed structure. This is the original, disputed structure floor level. Besides, there was a well laid chunam and kankar floor below this layer, running against the bases. Again, there was one more similarly laid floor below this, running against the base.

4. Thus, instead of one they found the remains of two floors of this pre-temple-mosque structure, which shows that the floor of the structure was restored almost completely and at least once.
5. At least in one example the base records the facts of destruction upto the foundation, evidenced by a rectangular pit without its brick base. It seems to have been done by laying a 'robber's trench' by someone interested in demolishing it and removing its bricks for some other structure.
6. In terms of archaeological stratigraphy, the two lower floors belonged to the pre-mosque structure.
7. Below the topmost floor they found a thick deposit of Islamic Glazed Ware pottery sherds of various types and colours, belonging some to the 13th, some to the 14th, and some to the 15th centuries. The find includes a White Glazed Ware with blue paintings which were in vogue in Persia in the 15th century.

But these findings cannot be held to be conclusive, in that Professor B.B.Lal, the hero of the archaeological drama, has relented a little and come out with the suggestion to carry out further excavations at the disputed site for sufficient light on the issue. He has remarked that 'unless further excavations are carried out, the two contending parties will continue to harp on the respective stands already taken by them.'[1] Again, disturbingly enough, Prof. Suraj Bhan reveals that, in a personal discussion with him, Professor Lal agreed on the following points:

'That there was found no evidence in his excavations at Ayodhya which could prove that the brick pillar structure in the trenches to the south of the Babari Masjid outside its compound wall was a Hindu temple.'

'That there was found no evidence in his excavations to prove that the stone pillars used in the Babari Masjid stood on the brick pillar "bases" found in the excavations.'

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[1] *The Times of India*, February 12, 1991

'That the vital evidence of the Muslim glazed ware (dated between 13-15 centuries) found in the above trenches marked the above age-limit of the structure of which the brick pillar stumps were a part suggesting thereby the non-existence of the brick pillar structure after the 14th century.'[1]

And Professor Suraj Bhan stands uncontradicted to this day.

Notwithstanding the confusing situation, however, confirmation of Prof. B.B. Lal's claims comes from an unexpected but authentic quarter, which cannot be brushed aside lightly. And it is a letter from Mr. Muhammed K.K., Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Madras Circle. Writing on the archaeological evidence of the existence of a temple displaced by the Bābarī mosque, he writes: 'I can reiterate this with greater authority–for I was the only Muslim who had participated in the Ayodhya excavations in 1976-1977 under Prof. Lal as a trainee in the School of Archaeology. I was at the Hanuman Garhi site, but I have visited the excavation near the Babri Masjid and seen excavated the pillar bases. The JNU historians have highlighted only one part of our findings while suppressing the other. I often wondered why Prof. Lal is keeping quiet about it while the JNU group went on a publishing spree.'[2]

Incidentally, the author of the letter adds a little later: 'Ayodhya is as holy to Hindus as Mecca to Muslims. Muslims should respect the sentiments of millions of their Hindu brethren and voluntarily hand over the structure for constructing the Rāma temple.'[3]

Besides, the four historians who have authored the Historians' Report to the Nation on the temple-mosque dispute have gone to the length of pointing an accusing finger at Professor B.B.Lal with the remarks: 'Though he excavated the ground over eleven years ago and thereafter published several papers on Ayodhya diggings, he first mentioned this

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1. *The Hindustan Times*, March 18, 1991
2. *The Indian Express*, December 15, 1990
3. *Loc. cit.*

discovery [of the brick bases in the close vicinity of the Bābarī mosque] only towards the end of 1990 (*Manthan*, October 1990). This delay, left unexplained, is certainly strange.' They wanted to check it against site notebook and the relevant register of antiquities as well as the relevant drawings, plans, photographs, excavated material, etc., but, they contend, the Government of India did not respond to their requests in this behalf. They add that in the original report on his findings Prof. B.B.Lal had made it clear: "Several later medieval brick-and-kankar lime floors have been met with, but the entire late period was devoid of any special interest." *Indian Archaeology, 1976-77 - A Review*, p.53).'[1]

These historians have made much of the adjective 'Islamic' in the 'Islamic Glazed Ware potsherds'. 'Islamic glazed ware pottery has never been used in Hindu temples', they assert, and draw the conclusion that 'the site was inhabited by Muslims who also lived in other parts of Ayodhya'.[2] They forget that such pottery has been used by Hindus as well. Its Muslim origin has nothing to do with its use.

Recently, however, a team of Drs. Y.D. Sharma, K.M.Srivastava and S.P.Gupta claim to have carried on some excavation on the site between June 18 and July 23, 1992, and found further evidence of an ancient Hindu temple of the 11th century there. 'A most significant piece of sculpture is the fragmentary image of Vishnu showing "Chakrapurusha", i.e. a youthful male figure standing gracefully in tribhanga and holding vertically in the palm of the right hand the characteristic wheel or chakra of Vishnu'. Certain other finds are reported to be typical of Nāgar style temples of northern India. The team also reports that they found several courses of huge burnt brick wall running north-south and the distinct flooring of large bricks arranged in semi-circular fashion belonging to periods between the first and the eleventh centuries. A long single piece was also found fixed as part of the entrance in the disputed structure, decorated with a fully opened lotus flower in the centre and two half lotus flowers. This also belongs to the 11th century. Dr. B.R.Grover came across the remains of a very large brick flooring at this level, not only in the whole of the acquired area by the U.P.Government, but also beyond it towards the disputed structure across the road built by the British after cutting the huge Ramkot mound into two. It is spreading over thousands of square feet.[1]

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[1] *Ramjanmabhumi-Babari Masjid: A Historians' Report to the Nation*

[2] *Loc. cit.*

But here, too, there are ugly circumstances out to kill the beautiful findings. The whole of the latest archaeological exercise is being adjudged illegal, for the simple reason that it was conducted without the permission of the Archaeological Survey of India, although two former Directors of the institution are actively involved in the excavations, namely, Dr. Yagya Datt Sharma and Dr. K.M. Srivastava. Besides, in the process of the excavation, even routine formalities were not observed. All the eighteen remains found in the course of the excavation were removed overnight without caring to let them remain in full view of the public and well guarded till such time as the Archaeological Survey of India, or even the relevant department of the State for that matter, was in a position to take charge of the matter.[2]

Further evidence of the replacement of the Rāma temple by the Bābarī mosque was unearthed on October 10, 1992, by the archaeologists and historians assembled at Ayodhya on the occasion of the workshop on Ayodhya. They found letter सि a inscribed on the top of the right hand outer pillar of the entrance of the Bābarī mosque facing east. The script in which it has been inscribed has been determined to be the *Kuṭila* script prevalent during the 10th to 12th centuries.

Besides the so-called Varāha image on the south corner of the outer wall of the Bābarī mosque transpires, on closer

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1. *The Hindustan Times*, August 8, 1992. Also see the *Indian Express* of same date
2. See the *Janasattā*, August 14, 1992

examination, to be part of the remains of the plinth of the temple which was destroyed. It appears that the existing wall overrides the basal part as superimposed upon it. Obviously, the base belongs to the structure of the destroyed temple.

8

EVIDENCE OF THE TRADITION

The Rāma cult or worship of the idol of Rāma is not too non-ancient to preclude the possibility of an old enough Rāma temple predating the inception of Muslim rule in Ayodhya. From the way Samudragupta remembers Rāghava, viz. Rāma, it would not be illegitimate to infer that he did not look upon Rāma as a god or an incarnation of Viṣṇu. His partly broken Eran stone inscription purports to say that in giving away gold in charity etc. he brought low Pṛthu, Rāghava, and others.[1] Yet, not long after him, in the sixth century A.D., Varāhamihira is found laying down rules for carving out images of Rāma the son of Daśaratha (*Daśaratha-tanayo Rāmaḥ*) and Viṣṇu in temples separately.[2] Which means that Rāma's Avatārahood or divinity was taken for granted in his time, as also that Rāma temples were already in existence then. Apart from the existing Rāma temples dating back to the 12th and 11th centuries A.D., there is at least one temple dedicated to Rāma on the Rāmagiri hill by the Vākāṭaka king of the

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[1] . . . . *suvarṇa-dāne*
. . . . . *(nyakkāritā) nṛpatayaḥ pṛthu-Rāghavādyāḥ.*
Eran Stone Inscription of Samudragupta, middle of the 4th century A.D. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol.III: Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors, by J.F.Fleet, Part I, reprinted by the authority of the Belvedere Steam Printing Works, Allahabad by E.Hall, 1914, Śloka 2. It will be seen that the whole of the first Śloka, the first two lines and almost the whole of the third line of the second Śloka quoted above, and part of its fourth line are broken away and lost.

[2] *Daśaratha-tanayo Rāmo, Baliś ca Vairocaniḥ śataṁ viṁśaṁ*
Dvādaśahānyā śeṣāḥ pravarasamanyūna-parimāṇāḥ
Kāryo 'ṣṭabhujo bhagavāṁś caturbhujo dvībhuja eva vā Viṣṇuḥ
Śrīvatsāṅkitavakṣāḥ kaustubhmaṇībhūṣitoraskaḥ.
Varāhamihira, *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* 58.30-31

Deccan in the fifth century A.D., known today as Rāmaṭek, near modern Nandardhan, 30 km. north-east of Nagpur.[1]

Now, it is usual for temples to be built on mounds and plateaux overlooking a town. On the other hand, it is a rule with mosques to be erected within easy reach from a palace inhabited as well as frequented by Muslims, such as a market-place, highway, and other such sites.[2] A mosque built in a desolate area or at a place unfrequented and difficult of access would be no mosque in the eye of the *Sharī'ah*.[3] And the Bābarī mosque is standing on the Ramkot mound and that, too, in an area which is said to have been devoid of Muslims all along. Indeed, in his judgment dated March 18, 1886, quoted earlier, Col.Chamier, District Judge, Fyzabad, has remarked that 'the masjid built by the Emperor Babar stands *on the border of the town* of Ayodhya, that is to say to the west and south. *It is clear of habitations.*'[4] (Italics added)

It is indeed unthinkable that the mound was not used for building a temple, while for building a mosque it was. Again, association of Ayodhya with the birth of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu predates the advent of Islam, much more so of Bābar and earlier Muslim marauders on Indian soil. Some Vikramāditya is traditioned to have discovered and determined the present Ayodhya to be the birth-place of Rāma. It is unbelievable, therefore, that the HIndus could not have thought of erecting a suitable temple for facility of Rāma's devotees, especially in view of the fact that regular fairs have been held from time immemorial on the occasion of his birthday celebrations every year. The fairs and their

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1. Abhas Kumar Chatterjee, 'Ram Janmabhoomi: More Evidence', *History versus Casuistry*, p.114
2. *Fatḥu 'l-Qadīr*, Vol. I, p.377
3. *Fatāwā-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Vol. VI, p.214. Also see Muḥammad Zafīru 'd-Dīn Pūrā-Nauḍīhāwī, *Islām kā Nizām-i Masājid*, p.181, for fuller information partaining to notes 88 and 89 both.
4. See Col. F.E.A. Chamier, District Judge, Faizabad's judgment dated March 18, 1886, in Civil Appeal No.27 of 1885, Mahant Raghubar Dass versus Secretary of State of India and Mohammed Ashgar Defendant-Respondents.

antiquity have been attested to by William Finch and Abu'l-Faḍl, as we have seen already.

It is also to be borne in mind that Hindus have never been interested in laying claim to others' places of worship, not to speak of shedding their blood in trying to usurp them. In fact, they did not feel called upon to retrieve the temples lost to the Muslim rulers even after decline of the Mughul power, not to speak of turning mosques into temples.

Well, gaps in history have to be filled up with the help of the tradition, if available. Take an example. No texts were composed concerning the life of the Prophet of Islam till after about 125 years of his death. Much of what we know of him comes from tradition. Likewise, the mosque built by him at Medinah, the *Masjidu 'n-Nabiyy* as it is called, out of mud-walls, palm-leaves, and palm-trunks, is no longer visible or even discernible, thanks to the drastic overhauling and modernization it has undergone since. It is only tradition which holds the mirror up to its identity.

Now, there is no evidence that the Bābarī mosque has not displaced the Rāma Janmabhūmī temple or that such a temple simply did not exist. That, had it existed and been demolished, Tulasīdāsa and so and so much have referred to it, is no argument. Alexander's invasion of India is a fact, yet it finds no mention in any contemporary Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, or Apabhraṁśa record. As for Tulasīdāsa, he does not take note of Akbar's even pro-Hindu reforms. It was not the way of Tulasīdāsa to speak of particular contemporary events. Besides, it is an open secret that the Hindus of old were bad at history, worse at geography, and worst at cartography. Hence such omissions on their part are quite understandable.

It is malicious to ascribe the origin of the tradition of the displacement of the Rāma temple with the Bābarī mosque to British propaganda pursuant to their (more mythical than real) policy of divide-and-rule. Apart from the questionability of imputing anything and everything to such a policy, the tradition is found to pre-exist the inception of the British rule in this country. As we have seen already, the British Government hastened to proscribe Mirzā Jān's *Ḥadīqah-ī Shuhadā* soon after its publication, whereas it would have proved a good contrivance to set the Hindus and the Muslims against each other.

It would be interesting to conclude this chapter with an artful censure of the pro-Bābarī historians by a boy of 15, who advises them to use this argument : 'Since the Hindus were great astrologers and forecasters they knew in *Treta Yuga* itself that in *Kaliyuga* in A.D. 1528 a person named Babar, who will be believer of Islam will come to Ayodhya. He would need a place to build a mosque for Allah and for angels. Hindus well known for their religious tolerance thought which else could be a better place for this than the palace of Lord Rama (Ram Kot) and the birth place of Rama itself. Thus they kept the place reserved for Babar to build a mosque on the birth place, surrounded by Sita-ki-Rasoi, Kausalya Bhawan, Hanumangarhi etc. etc. They must have undergone tremendous trouble in keeping the place free and constantly renewing the lease of land for Babar. But their astrological calculations went wrong and they did not realize that there will be another king in the line called Aurangzeb and did not leave any land free for him to build the mosques. Thus, he ordered the destruction of thousands of temples to build the mosques thereon.'[1]

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[1] K.S.Ramchandran, *Ayodhya Dispute and Prof. Irfan Habib : A Distortea Scholarship*, pp.30-31

9

COULD BĀBAR NOT HAVE REPLACED THE RĀMA TEMPLE BY THE MOSQUE ?

The following three positions have come to the fore in regard to the demolition and/or construction of the Rāma temple and the Bābarī mosque respectively:

1. That Bābar was responsible for both the demolition and the construction.
2. That he was responsible for neither, apart from restoration of the mosque which was already in existence.
3. That it was built out of nothing by Mīr Bāqī on or without Bābar's orders.

That ours is the first position, is self-evident. The second position is held by Dr. R.Nath and certain others and the third, by the so-called 'secular' scholars and Muslim leaders. We have so far been seized of the first and third alternatives, and it is time we take up the second alternative.

This second alternative is a broad spectrum of varying opinions. According to some, Bābar never visited Ayodhya, whence he could not have replaced the temple with the mosque or even built the mosque on a desolate site. According to some others, the inscriptions on the mosque do not mention the fact of the replacement, whence Bābar cannot be held responsible for the temple-demolition, if the demolition is a fact at all. According to still others, Mīr Bāqī himself built the mosque and yet remembers Bābar by way of expression of loyalty only. According to the 'secular' scholars and Muslim leaders in general, Bābar was too tolerant to think of destroying a temple. And, finally, according to Dr. Nath, the so-called Bābari mosques at Ayodhya, Sambhal, and Panipat were assignable to the Lodī period, on the basis of their architectural and art-historical features, Bābar appearing to him to be responsible for only their restoration or renovationn.

We have disposed of the first three variations of the second alternative directly or indirectly. Here we are called upon to examine the last two theses. Let us first take up Dr. Nath's thesis.

Dr. Nath's finding is that Ramkot 'was devastated either by the armies of Maḥmūd of Ghaznin or the Delhi Sultans who captured the palace and established here their provincial seat. It is quite probable, and possible too, that a mosque was first raised during the Sultanate period (1001-30; 1192-1526) on the site of the most important temple associated with the life of Rāma, and Mīr Bāqī just restored that mosque during his occupation of Ayodhya.'[1] Dr. Nath adds : 'His hectic military activity in the region could not have allowed him enough time to build a mosque anew, least to demolish a temple and raise a mosque in its place. He could not venture to outrage the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus of the region by embarking upon such an iconoclastic programme, which he had none, while restoration of a dilapidated or ruined mosque could have certainly assuaged and placated the feelings of the Muslim inhabitants whose goodwill and help too the Mughuls needed against the Afghan rebels as compulsively as those of the Hindus.'[2] Again, according to Dr. Nath, an idea of his style and taste can be had from the gardens (*bāgh*-s) he founded at Kabul, Agra, and Dholpur, and above all from the Jal-Maḥal at Fatehpur Sikri, which is most typical of his style.[3] And the style is conspicuous by its absence in the Ayodhya temple.

But the architectural style of the disputed structure displaying Lodī/Afghān traits does not warrant the assertion that it came into being in the Lodī/Afghān period. The just four-year long Bābar regime marks what may be called a period of transition, wherein continuance of earlier

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1. R. Nath, p.38
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

architectural forms is quite within the realms of possibility. Dr. Nath's restoration theory, too, does not appear to be impeccable. His contention is that the disputed mosque was not built anew but was only restored, by Mīr Bāqī on Bābar's orders. Restored from What? Dr. Nath replies, from ruins and dilapidation. He does not visualize the alternative that the mosque might have been restored, if restored it was, from the hands of the Hindus who had regained control of the structure from the Afghāns. We have seen that William Finch does not mention the mosque or the Muslims using it or inhabiting the mound. What he purports to say, on the other hand, is that only *Paṇḍā*-s are found in the ruins of Ramkot. It is quite possible that the disputed mosque was under the control of the Hindus and in a dilapidated condition. That is perhaps why even Abu 'l-Faḍl does not take notice of it.

It is true that Ramkot was devastated under the Sultanate, but the tyrants do not appear to have succeeded in rensacking the Rāma temple complex entire. How tough the fight put up by the Hindus against the Muslim onslaughts in Awadh might have been is well attested to by the example of Baratūh (Bharathū/ Bharatū?), who is reported to have put to the sword one lakh twenty thousand Muslims, though he was vanquished in 623 A.H./1226 A.D. by Prince Malik Nāṣiru 'd-Dīn Maḥmūd, governor of Awadh.[1]

As a matter of fact, there is not the faintest tradition of the destruction of the Rāma temple by some pre-Bābar ruler, although there is of the post-Bābar Auraṅgzīb. Besides, none of the inscriptions of the mosque speak of restoration of the mosque by Bābar or by Mīr Bāqī, and at least one of the inscriptions is in situ. Even read together, the three inscriptions of the mosque leave no doubt that the mosque was built by Mīr Bāqī on Bābar's orders or at any rate during his regime. It is true that they make no mention of the temple-demolition but, then, same is the case with the Sambhal mosque, which is admitted on all hands to have displaced a temple, as also with other Bābarī mosques as shown earlier.

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[1] Minhāj Sirāj, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p.181

Indeed, architectural-stylistic considerations must not be allowed to outweigh all other considerations taken together. Tradition and records of all kinds are unanymous in holding Bābar responsible for replacement of the Rāma temple with the Bābarī mosque. In this connexion, instead of Bābar's, Aurangzīb's name does figure sometimes, but it is not so serious an aberration or half-truth. Aurangzīb ransacked the temples of Ayodhya in his own day and, who knows, he might have had a hand, after Bābar, in tampering with the Rāma temple in his own turn. We have seen that part of the temple complex had survived Bābar/Mīr Bāqī's vandalism in some form somehow or other.

10

WAS BĀBAR TOO TOLERANT TO DEMOLISH THE RĀMA TEMPLE ?

No, Bābar was anything but too tolerant to demolish the temple. Temple demolition had been the order of the day ever since the advent of Islam, and there is no reason to believe that Bābar struck out an opposite line for himself and thereby anticipated his grandson (Akbar). By all accounts, he continued the policy of his predecessors in an orthodox fashion, except possibly for hitting the Hindus a little harder by subjecting them to pay stamp duties (*tamaghah*) over and above the *Jizyah* and Pilgrimage Tax already imposed on them to the exclusion of the Muslims.

An officer of Bābar, Hindū Beg, converted the Hari Mandir at Sambhal into a mosque.[1] His Ṣadr, Shaykh Zayn, demolished a number of temples when he occupied it.[2] And his destruction of Jain temples at Urwa near Gwalior?[3] He was exhorted by a noble of Kabul to conquer India with the remark that 'God and Muḥammad engaged you to extinguish the idolatry of the Indians.[4] He raised a tower of Hindu skulls at Fatehpur Sikri and Chanderi and assumed the title of Ghāzī (killer of infidels in *Jihād*). He makes no bones about it. He writes: 'After this success *Ghāzī* (Victor in a Holy-War) was written amongst the royal titles. Below the titles (*ṭughrā*) entered on the *Fatḥ-nāma*, I wrote the following quatrain :

For Islam's sake, I wandered in the wilds,
Perpared for war with pagans and Hindūs,

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[1] *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, XII, 26-27

[2] *Tārīkh-i Bābarī* (MS), 145, cited in Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p.9

[3] *Babur-Nama*, II, p.612

[4] S.R.Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, p.16

Resolved myself to meet the martyr's death
Thanks be to God ! a ghāzī I became.[1]

Bābar's memoirs are full of contemptuous references to the Hindus. Ordering gold and silver goblets and cups and other utensils used for drinking parties to be dashed upon the earth and broken down, he remarked, 'They dashed them in pieces, as, God willing! soon will be dashed the gods of the idolaters'.[2] Why not? 'Abdu 'I-Quddūs Gaṅgohī, a Muslim divine and Ṣūfī of repute, taught him in a long letter to humble and humiliate infidels in all possible ways, and compel them to hide their infidelity and not to practise it publicly, and thereby bring the glory of Islam to perfection.[3]

With a strong sense of belonging to the line of Chingīẓ Khān, Bābar followed his custom of setting fire to towns for good omen and did so at Lahore (*Bābar qarīn-i fatḥ-o zafar ba-bilād-i Lāhaur dar-āmadah chunāṅ-ki rasm-o ādāb-i Chingīziyān ast bāzār-hā jihat-i fāl-o shagūn ātish zad*).[4] While condemning Bābar for his tyranny in strongest terms, the great Guru Nānak makes a clear reference to the arson and massacre, including burning of temples, carried out by him at Aimanabad thus:

Thān mukām jale bij mandar muchhi muchhi kuir rulāiyā[5]

As regards Bābar's attitude towards temples, enough has been said by now. One issue remains to be taken care of, however. Bābar admired the beauty of the Teli/Tilangana temple at Gwalior.[6] On this ground it is asserted that such Bābar cannot demolish temples. But it is forgotten that even Maḥmūd of Ghaznīn was impressed by temple architecture. He was all praise for the temples of Mathura, the like of which, according to him, it would take full two centuries to

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1. *Babur-Nama*, II, pp. 574-575
2. *Ibid.*, pp.554-555
3. *Maktūbāt-i 'Abdu 'l-Quddūs Gangohī* (MS), No.104 (Taṣauuf), University Collections, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Letter No.169
4. *Tārīkh-i Firishtah*, Vol.I (Persian). Cp. Urdu tr., I, p.121
5. *Guru Nānak Racanāvalī*, Bābar-Vāṇī 3, p.246
6. *Babur-Nama*, II, p.613

build up and that, too, at the cost of one lakh gold coins per temple.[1] But, then, this did not stand in the way of his tiring out himself by smashing them all. It is rather the way of vandals and philistines to make works of art the first target of their attack.

Well, as regards the Ayodhya temple, we have seen how, according to a certain record, Bābar was first hesitant in ordering its demolition but had to yield to the pressure exercised by Mīr Mūsā 'Āshiqān and Sayyid Jalāhu'd-Dīn.

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[1] *Tārīkh-i Firishtah*, I, p.588; Al-'Uṭbī, *Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, pp.44-45

11

THE ALLEGED TOLERANCE-RADIATING TESTAMENT OF BĀBAR

N.C.Mehta, an eminent scholar-artist-statesman, discovered at Bhopal a document entitled *Waṣiyyatnāmah-i Makhfiyy-i Ẓahīru 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Bābar Bādshāh-i Ghāzī ba-Shāzādah Naṣīru 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Humāyūṅ Ṭawwala 'Ilāhu 'Umru-hū* (The Secret Testament/Will of Ẓahīru 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Bābar Bādshāh-i Ghāzī to Shāhzādah Naṣīru 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Humāyūṅ – May Allāh prolong his life !)[1]

It runs as under: 'This is written to strengthen the empire. O son! the empire of Hindustan is full of different religions. Praise be to Allāh that God the Great and Almighty confer the sovereignty upon thee. Cleanse the tablet of thy heart of religious bigotry and administer justice in accordance with the custom of each creed. In particular, abstain from cow-sacrifice, for that is the way to win the hearts of the people of Hindustan, and the ryots of this land are bound (to the throne) by royal favours. And do not desecrate/destroy temples and shrines of every community that is under the royal command. Administer justice in such a way that the king rest content with the ryots and the ryots with the king. Islam is advanced better by the sword of favours than by the sword of oppression. Close thy eyes to the quarrels of Sunnī and Shī'ah, otherwise Islam will get weakened. Hold the ryots of many minds on the pattern of the four elements, so that the body of the kingdom remain immune from various distempers. The Kārnāmah of His Highness Amīr Tīmūr

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[1] S.K.Bannerjee, 'Babur and the Hindus', *Journal of the U.P.Historical Society*, 9, ii (1936), 93

Ṣāhib-Qirānī should be kept before the eyes, so as to become expert in statecraft.'(See the original in Appendix IV) [1]

On the basis of this testament, it is asserted that only a tolerant Bābar could create such a document.

It is true that, in the testament, Bābar is all tolerance, quite contrary to what he actually was, as shown in the preceding chapter. His memoirs contain not a word of tolerance towards the Hindus, who are always referred to therein as Kāfir-s, an expression conspicuous by its absence in the document. Far from promulgating an ordinance against cow-slaughter, he has not left to us even the remotest indication towards it even in the memoirs. He exhorts Humāyūṅ to emulate Tīmūr, who was tyranny personified by all accounts. Bābar pats himself on emerging as a crescentader (*mujāhid*) and slayer of infidels (*ghāzī*) in his memoirs and teaches his son in the testament to be kind to them !

A stranger part of the story is that this testament never came to anybody's notice before its recent discovery. Even Abu 'l-Faḍl and Guldaban Bagum show no awareness of it. Indeed, Humāyūṅ himself does not appear to have seen it. He appears to follow in the footsteps, and not in the so-called teachings, of his father, as will transpire just now.

Khwānd Amīr pays glowing tributes to Humāyūṅ as a consolidator of the pillars of the *Sharī'at* (*dar taqwiyyat-i arkan-i sharī'at-i gharrā masā'ī-i jamīlah mabdhūl dāshtah*) and as an uprooter of infidelity by flying the flag of Jihād (*a'lām-i ghazw wa jihād afrākhtah asās-i shawkat-i ahl-i kufr wa 'inād rā az bunyād bar-andākhtand*).[2] Sample Khwand Amir's couplets also to the same effect:

Bar-afrāzad a'lām-i Islām rā
Bar-andāzad aṣnām-i bad-nām rā
Ba-shamshīr-i ghzw-o sanān-ī jihād
Kunad daf'-i aṣḥāb-i kufr-o 'inād[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p.94. The translation is mine. See the original in Appendix IV

[2] Ghiyāthu 'd-Dīn Muḥammad, otherwise known as Khwānd Amīr, *Qānūn-i Humāyūnī*, also known as *Humāyūṅ-Nāmah*, p.6

[3] *Ibid.*, p.20

Translation : 'He holds aloft the banner of Islam and knocks down the infamous idols. He does away with people of infidelity and hostility (to Islam).'

Quite in keeping with this portait of his, on his way to conquest of Gujarat, Humāyūṅ received a letter from its ruler, Bahādurshāh, to the effect that 'he had laid siege to Chetur, and hoped very shortly to subdue the infidels and exalt the fame of the Mussulman faith, and therefore hoped his majesty would not interfere.' What was Humāyūṅ's reaction? 'The King, from his attachment to the true faith and his heroical spirit, complied with the request'.[1] Another episode which throws lights on Humāyūṅ's attitude towards the Hindus.: Humāyūṅ entered the territoy of Māladeva, ruler of Jodhpur. Māladeva took exception to it. This was not all : Humāyūṅ 'killed these sacred animals' (cows), for which he was condemned by Māladeva. And, instead of feeling sorry for the act of indiscretion, Humāyūṅ marched against him.[2]

Indeed, Humāyūṅ appears to have had scant regard for the feelings of the Hindus vis-à-vis their sacred symbols. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān writes that the summer house (*bārahdarī*) called *Nīlī Chhatarī* at the Nigambodh ghat below Salimgadh was built by Humāyūṅ with bricks bearing broken images (of gods/goddesses) pulled out (*ukhāḍ kar*) of some Hindu building/place.[3] This fact speaks for itself. Not a trace of the testament is traceable here.

The bulk of historians have declared the testament a downright forgery. Mrs. A.S.Beveridge, who translated the *Babur-Nama*, dismisses it as a forged document on fifteen counts including language and style, calligraphy and spelling, unroyal quality of the seals, mutually contradictory chronology (on the top 933 A.H. and at the bottom 935 A.H.), titles used for the father and the son, and what not.[4] Dr.

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[1] *Tezkereh al Vakiat* or *Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, written in the Persian Language by Jouher (a confidential domestic of his majesty), tr. by Major Charles Stewart, p.2

[2] *Ibid*., p.41

[3] Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khāṅ, *Āthāru 'ṣ-Ṣanādīd*, p.232

[4] A.S.Beveridge (Mrs.), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Britain and*

Radhey Shyam quotes her in full and strives to bring up some not very strong counter-arguments; but he, too, refrains from asserting that the document is authentic.[1]

Even apart from the questionableness of the authenticity of Bābar's testament, there is no incompatibility between the document and temple demolition by him. Precept and practice are often found apart. The putative author of the testament, viz. Bābar, taught ban on cow-slaughter, but never thought of the ban all his life. Likewise, there is no reason why he could not have kept his tolerance in abeyance while ordering temple demolition.

We cannot resist the temptation of quoting Koenraad Elst on the contentions of those who take Bābar to have been too tolerant to demolish the Rāma temple. Elst demonstrates the circularity of their reasoning thus: 'Major: Bābar did not do anything fanatical. Minor: demolishing the supposed Ram Janmabhoomi temple (if it ever existed) would have been fanatical. Conclusion: Bābar didn't demolish a Ram Janmabhoomi Temple.'[2] It is evident that 'That Babar never destroyed temples, as postulated in the major, is a contention dependent on the correctness of the conclusion, viz. that he did not destroy the Ayodhya temple.'[3] Besides, as observed by Elst, 'human beings are such that they sometimes do uncharacteristic things, so that even generally tolerant people are sometimes intolerant.'[4] Nidā Fāḍilī sings:

Har ādamī meiṅ hote haiṅ das bīs ādamī
jis ko bhī dekhanā ho ka'ī bār dekhanā

Translation : 'In every man there are numerous men. Whomsoever you have to see see him again and again.'

Take the case of Akbar, Bābar's grandson. The precedent of temple destruction set by Bābar among the Mughuls continued to be followed not only by his son but by his

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Ireland, January, 1923, pp. 78-82

1. Radhey Shyam, *Babar*, Appendix IV
2. Koenraad Elst, *Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid*, p.46
3. *Ibid.*, pp.46-47
4. *Ibid.*, p.47

grandson as well, in the early years of the latter's reign. In 1572 A.D., there took place desecration of temples at Kangra in which the umbrella of the goddess was riddled with arrows.[1] A temple at Varanasi was converted into a Maktab (school of religious instruction).[2] Even against Akbar's orders, a Mughul governor destroyed Jain idols in Gujarat.[3] Hājī Sulṭān of Thanesar, a co-translator of the *Mahābhārata* with Naqīb Khān, killed a cow there, for which, however, he was penalized.[4]

These incidents occurred in Akbar's despite. But there are others which took place on account of Akbar. The *Fatḥnāmah* of Chittor issued in 1568 from Ajmer and dedicated to Akbar, after his conquest of Chittor,[5] duly reflects and represents his stiff attitude towards the infidels during the first phase of his religious career,[6] summed up by Prof. Khalīq Aḥmad Nizāmī as under:[7]

'(1) It contains more than two dozen quotations from the *Qur'ān*.

'(2) The Chittor campaign has been presented as a "religious war against infidels" and Akbar's zeal for *Jihād* has been highlighted.

'(3) The *Fathnama* begins, with slight variations, with the opening lines of the Prophet's speech after the conquest of Mecca.

'(4) Subjugation of the "forts and towns of the infidels" and the "idol-temples of the polytheists" has been presented as the main concern and preoccupation of the Emperor.

'(5) The words *Khalīfa* and *Khilāfat* have been used for Akbar's authority several times.

'(6) All victories are presented as the result of Divine help

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1. Badāyūnī, ***Muntakhabu 't-Tawārīkh***, tr., II, p.165
2. 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf, ***Safarnāmah***, p.75
3. ***Tārīkh-i Bāyazīd***, pp.263-264
4. Badāyūnī, III, tr., p.173
5. Khalīq Aḥmad Niẓāmī, ***Akbar and Religion***, p.363
6. Niẓāmī spells out three phases of Akbar's religious career: 1556-1574, 1575-1580, and 1581-1605. Ibid., p.100
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 383-384

> received by the Emperor. Greater power to wage further *Jihād* is prayed for....'

In fact, in his letter to 'Abdullāh Khān Uzbek, who had charged him with indifference to Islam, Akbar rejects such an accusation as slanderous and refers to his services to Islam thus: 'During these thirty years, such an effort has been made (by me) to cleanse the land of Hindustan (of *Kufr*) that temples of Hindus the irreligious have turned into shrines of God-fearing *darwīsh*-es and instead of the sound of idolaters' bell the sound of *Namāz* is running high (***dar īṅ sī sāl dar pāk** kardan-i zamīn-i Hindustān chandāṅ koshish ba-jā āwurdah ki... butkhānah-hā-i Hinduān-i bad-kīsh khānqāh-i darwīshān-i Khudā-andesh gardīd, wa ba-jā-i āwāz-i nāqūs-i butparastāṅ bāṅg-i namāz balandī girift*).[1]

It needs no saying that Akbar's son, grandson, and the arch temple-destroyer great-grandson followed Bābar, Humāyūṅ, and Akbar in the first phase of his religious career with increasing impunity. There is reason to believe, besides, that examples of temple destruction by royal decree are available till the reign of Muḥammad Shāh.[2] Incidentally, Sher Shāh Sūrī, who marked a temporary break in the continuity of Mughul rule, did not mark a break in the continuity of the convention of temple destruction. He, too, had the ambition of converting temples into mosques at any rate in Jodhpur (*ma'bid-i kuffār rā Islāmābād sāzam*).[3] Also, there is a local tradition that his conquest and occupation of Jodhpur was followed by conversion of the Hindu temple in the fort into a mosque, in all probability into the existing Sher Shāh mosque there.

Well, if Bābar did leave a real testament to Humāyūṅ, it is the one which is given by Abu 'l-Faḍl (vide Appendix V). Abu 'l-Faḍl writes: 'When he saw death approaching fast, Bābar called his top officials and nobles in his presence, administered them oath of allegiance to Humāyūṅ, appointed him his successor, and, seating him on the royal throne himself remained bed-ridden (*sāhib-ī farāsh)* at the foot of the throne. Khawājah Khalīfah, Qanbar 'Alī Beg, Tardī Beg, Hindū Beg, and a great many were there in attendance upon him. He gave him lofty instructions and precious testamentary admonitions (*waṣāyā-i garāmī*), which could constitute his fortune for abiding sovereignty and cause for lasting happiness. He also showed him the way to charity, justice, beneficence, exerton to win God's favour, indulgence towards the subjects, protection of the people, accepting offenders' apology, pardoning criminals, indulgence towards lapses of experienced persons, and repression of rebels and tyrants. He uttered with his holy tongue, "The upshot of my testament is: Be not after the life of your brothers, howsoever much they deserve such treatment."[1]

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[1] *Maktūbāt-i Abu 'l-Faḍl*, I, pp. 11-26, Akbar's letter reproduced in Niẓāmī, p.357

[2] Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them*, II, pp. 150 ff.

[3] 'Abdullāh, *Tārīkh-i Dāwūdī*, p.156

This deserves to be designated as the real testament of Bābar, at any rate as a document in lieu of a real testament. It is a pity that those setting too much store by the Secret Testament of Bābar are totally ignorant of this real testament left to Humāyūṅ at the moment of the former's death.

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[1] Abu 'l -Faḍl, *Akbar-Nāmah*, I, p.135. See copy of the text in Appendix V

12

ATTEMPTS TO SIDETRACK, SLIGHT, AND SUPPRESS EVIDENCE

Of quite a few casualties of the standards of academic integrity at the hands of self-styled 'secular' academics, those in the fied of medieval Indian historiography happen to be the worst. And, ironically enough, it is they who have begun to storm the world by raising the bogey of distortion of history. Broadly speaking, deliberate distortion of history is a phenomenon of recent growth, say of the current half century. It has been unknown by and large to the main line of Indian historiography. Thanks to the growing politicization of the aristocracy of letters, the unwary are being fed on the misconception that the tales of tyranny over the Hindus under the Sulṭāns and Mughuls are all fabrications of the colonialistically motivated British and pro-British historians in pursuance of the much-maligned British policy of divide-and-rule. Whereas the truth of the matter is that the tales have been told by medieval Muslim chroniclers–contemporaries, near-contemporaries, and eye-witnesses–as well as by some of the tyrants themselves. A veritable brain washing of the nation is under way trying to turn history upside down and write off the persecution of the Hindus through various subterfuges.

The method followed by such historians consists of a number of assumptions. First, Muslim tyranny over the Hindus is sought to be ruled out. When researches of Sarkar and the like are referred to, they are dismissed as communal historians. When British historians, compilers, and translators are referred to, they are brushed aside as colonialists interested in setting the one community against the other. When the medieval Muslim historians are referred to, they are discarded as Dārbārī sychophants. When the Jihādic zeal and even candid confessions of such Hindu-persecutors as Maḥmūd of Ghaznin, Tīmūr, Fīrozshāh Tughluq, and Ṭīpū Sulṭān are referred to, they are laughed away as a cloak for a purely politic-economic motive. As Prof. K.S.Lal would have it, 'If the medieval chronicler cries out "Jihād", it is not heard; but if he cries aloud persistently, it is claimed that he never meant it.'[1] Finally, if the Jihādic character of the tyranny stands out in bold relief all the same, it is contended that religious persecution was the order of the day.

Quite in keeping with it all, Professor 'Irfān Ḥabīb adjudges the Rāma temple demolition story as a myth and ascribes its creation to 'Muslim communalist bravado' in order to score a point, viz. in order to proclaim the superiority of Muslim power over Hindu.[2] But can he give a single example of any Muslim author creating the fiction of demolition of any temple which either never existed or was never demolished? Cases can be cited of Muslim writers' ignoring or omitting facts of temple demolition but not one of fabricating a fiction thereof. It must not be forgotten that Mirzā Jān was a participant in the crescentade for recovery from the Bairāgī-s of the two Ayodhya temple-mosques, the Bābarī mosque and the Hanumāngaḍhī, and that his case would have greatly bolstered up in the court of the king of Awadh and in the eyes of the British Resident if the demolition story had been denied altogether as is being done today.

The irony of the situation is that, when people were not in a position to produce evidence of the temple demolition, they were jeered at for sustaining something without proof. When the British authors' evidence was produced, it was rejected as being motivated. When Muslim authors' evidence is being produced, it is being sought to be rejected as motivated in its own way. God knows what type of evidence will satisfy people of this ilk. The historian has the knack of

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1. K.S. Lal, *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p.86
2. *Qaumī Āwāz*, February 23, 1991

extracting history from brick and stone. And here we have a lot of direct literary evidence, even from the pen of pro-mosque authors.

Critics will do well to remember that demolition of the Rāma temple has never been doubted save in our own time. It is true that Bābar, Mīr Bāqī, and Tulasīdāsa mention neither the temple nor its demolition, but, had they mentioned the same, critics like Prof. 'Irfān Ḥabīb would have dubbed them liars displaying Muslim communal bravado ! Again, if non-mention of the Rāma temple demolition by Mīr Bāqī be proof positive of its non-demolition or absolute non-existence, non-mention of the Bābarī mosque by Abu 'l-Faḍl and William Finch would amount to proof of its disappearance after Mīr Bāqī. In fact, mere non-mention is not enough. The evidential value of the first non-mention is nullified by other evidence of the temple demolition, while the second non-mention's evidential value is enhanced by the fact that there is no evidence of its continuance as a mosque till as late as 1707, as we have seen already. Indeed, non-mention unsupported by other circumstances is seldom a safe anchorage for such conclusions.

There has for some time past been in evidence a sinister move in certain quarters to suppress, conceal, or eliminate primary sources in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu testifying to the temple demolition. Examples follow.

We have seen in a previous chapter that such reference is available in the Arabic text entitled *Janna al-Mashriq wa Maṭla' an-Nūr al-Mashriq* (practically stated, *Jannatu 'l-Mashriq-i wa Maṭla'u 'n-Nūr-i 'l-Mashriq*), otherwise known as *Al-Hind fi 'l-'Ahd-i 'l-Islāmiyy*, by Maulānā Ḥakīm Sayyid 'Abdu 'l-Ḥayy, Maulānā 'Alī Miyāṅ's father, translated by Maulānā Shama Tabrīz Khāṅ under the title *Hindustān Islāmī 'Ahd meiṅ*. Obviously for no fault of the book except the reference therein to the temple demolition, the Urdu version is found to have been withdrawn from circulation and even removed from several libraries. There is an English translation also, with which undue liberties have been taken. Writes the leading journalist and thinker Arun Shourie: 'Each reference to each of these mosques having been constructed on the sites of temples with, as in the case of the mosque at Benares, the stones of the very temple which was demolished for that very purpose have been censored out of the English version of the book! No accident that.' Mr. Shourie adds: 'Indeed, there is not just censorship but substitution. In the Urdu volume we are told in regard to the mosque at Qannauj for instance that "This mosque stands on an elevated ground inside the fort of Qannauj. It is well known that it was built on the foundation of some Hindu temple (that stood) here." In the English volume we are told in regard to the same mosque that "It occupied a commanding site, believed to have been the place earlier occupied by an old and decayed fort."[1]

In a previous chapter we have seen how the four historians have, in their report to the Government of India, slighted the *Ṣaḥīfah-: Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādur-shāhī* instead of pursuing its search with the resources at their command. Indeed, they have gone to the extent of denying the very existence of such a book simply on the ground that it does not find mention in certain catalogues of Persian manuscripts.

Another Persian text of Mawlawiyy 'Abdu 'l-Karim is not available to us. No efforts seems to have been made by the historians in power, in the Indian Council of Historical Research for instance. It is a pity that none of the 'secular' historians have to their credit the search for any of the Muslim sources discovered by us. Their job appears to be only to discourage and stifle attempts to carry out such a search.

An Urdu translation of the work was published by Maulānā 'Abdu 'l-Ghaffār under the old or a new title *Gumgashtah Ḥālāta-i Ajodhyā Ya'nī Tārīkh-i Pārīnah-i Madīnatu 'l-Awliyā* some time before 1932. Thereafter, at least two more editions came out in 1979 and 1981 respectively. In some edition or editions before the 1981 edition, there is a clear narration of the story of the demolition of the Rāma temple on p.40 thereof. Only this page of that edition has come to our hand. Maybe, fuller accounts were contained in that edition on matters connected with the demolition story. Any way, even the account appearing on that page is conspicuous by its absence in the 1981 edition which is available to us.

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[1] Arun Shourie & others, *Hindu Temples*, p.9

Another such example is the fate of the *Muraqqan-i Khusrawī* by Shaykh Muḥammad 'Aẓamat 'Alī Kākorawī Nāmi, an eye-witness to much that happened during Wājid 'Alī Shāh's reign. The work was completed in 1969 but could see the light of day only in 1986, and that, too, after axing one whole section from it. Only one manuscript of the work is extant and that is in the Tagore Library of Lucknow University. A press copy of it was prepared by Dr. Zakī Kākorawī for publication with the final assistance of the Fakhru 'd-Dīn 'Alī Aḥmad Memorial Committee, U.P., Lucknow. The committee vetoed the publication out of its funds of the section dealing with the crescentade led by Mawlawiyy Amīr 'Alī Ameṭhawī for re-possession of the Hanumāngaḍhī and the Bābarī mosque, on the ground that its publication would not be opportune in view of the prevailing political situation.[1] The result was that Dr. Kākorawī had to publish the book minus that section in 1986. Later, however, he made bold to publish the excluded section separately without the Committee's aid or assistance under the title *Amīr 'Alī Shahīd aur Ma'rakah-i Hanumāngaḍhī* in 1987 from his own Markaz-i Adab-i Urdu, Lucknow. We have quoted from it earlier. Dr. Kākorawī rightly laments that 'suppression of any part of any old composition or compilation like this can create difficulties and misunderstandings for future historians and researchers.'[2]

Dr. Kākorawī has one more such feather to his cap. The original edition of Mirzā Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr's *Fasānah-i 'Ibrat,* comprised of a historical narrative of the last four rulers of Awadh, was compiled around the middle of the last century but saw the light of day in 1884 A.D. It contained a reference to the demolition of the Rāma temple. Sayyid Mas'ūd Ḥasan

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[1] Nāmī, *Amīr 'Alī Shahīd aur Ma'rakah-i Hanumāngaḍhī*, p.3

[2] *Loc. cit.*

Rizwī Adīb omitted the reference altogether in its second edition in 1957. Had Dr. Kākorawī not thought it fit to supply the omission in his third, 1977 edition, we would have been deprived of a valuable source of our knowledge of the temple's destruction. It redounds to his credit that he has drawn pointed attention to this important source by also including the account as an appendix to the *Amīr 'Alī Shahīd aur Ma'rakah-i Hanumāngaḍhī*.

Of late, certain 'secular' historians have brought out compilations on the Rāma Janmabhūmi-Bābarī Mosque issue, such as the following:

1. *Babari Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy*, ed. Asghar Ali Engineer, Delhi, 1990
2. *Anatomy of a Confrontation : The Babari Masjid - Ram Janmabhumi Issue*, S.Gopal, Viking, 1991
3. Sushil Srivastava, *The Disputed Mosque: A Historical Inquiry*, New Delhi, 1991
4. R.S.Sharma, *Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya*, New Delhi, 1990. Their incredibly partisan approach has come under fire at the hands of responsible scholars thus: 'A.N.Engineer's book...is merely a collection of newspaper columns on the subject, or rather a selection, for the above mentioned pertinent critiques by dr. Harsh Narain, A.K.Chatterjee and prof. A.R.Khan.. as well as the relevant articles by Arun Shourie, Ram Swarup, Sita Ram Goel and Jay Dubashi, have been carefully omitted...The only two pro-Hindu articles which he has deigned to include, both published in the RSS paper *Organiser*, were selected for their containing a few weak arguments and poor comparisons, which he then takes on in his introduction.'[1] Further, 'Two weeks after Harsh Narain's article had been published and had disproven the "Janmabhoomi myth" concoction thesis, the *Illustrated Weekly* decided to publish the already well publicized JNU statement once more. Even after A.R.Khan's reply had exploded the objective and scientific pretence of the JNU historians, the whole

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[1] Koenraad Elst, *Ayodhya and After*, p.85

> secularist crowd kept on quoting the "eminent historians". More than half a year later, the leftist paper *Mainstream* still quotes them as "several eminent historians whose professional honesty nobody questions".[1] Again, 'In his *Anatomy of a Confrontation,* the JNU historians do not even mention the powerful argumentation by prof. A.R.Khan, while prof. Harsh Narain and Mr. A.K.Chatterjee's presentation of authentic testimonies...are only mentioned but not detailed and discussed, let alone refuted; but clumsy RSS pamphlets and improvised statements by BJP orators are quoted and analyzed at length.'[2] Further on, 'a number of the documents, facts and insights presented by people like prof. A.R.Khan, prof. Harsh Narain and Mr. A.K.Chatterjee, have been ignored in nicely published books by prestigious authors like the JNU historians, prof. R.S.Sharma and Mr. A.A.Engineer.[3]

As a matter of fact, black-out of well documented, acutely argued contributions reinforcing the Hindu standpoint by both the electronic and the print media continues with renewed vigour. A certain leading library of the country of late instituted an enquiry as to how a particular book came to be utilized by the Vishva Hindu Parishad.[4]

It is a pity that, thanks to our thoughtless 'secularism' and waning sense of history, such primary sources of medieval Indian history as referred to above are presently in danger of suppression or total extinction. Instead of launching sustained search and research in this behalf, 'secular' historians are going about dismissing relevant data out of hand, imputing unfounded motive to the recorders themselves. The state in general and the universities in particular must do something to protect and retrieve such invaluable documents from unscrupulous hands.

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1. *Ibid.*, p.86
2. Koenraad Elst, *Negationism in India*, p.40
3. *Ibid.*, p.106
4. 'Vishwa Hindu Parishad ko *Ḥadīqah-i Shuhadā* Kaise Milī', *Qaumī Āwāz*, April 4, 1991

13

VERDICT OF THE SHARĪ'AH

What could be the verdict of the *Sharī'ah* on the vexed question of the replacement of the Rāma temple with the mosque in question by Bābar? The following issues arise in this behalf:

1. Can a mosque be raised on a usurped (*maghṣūb*) site?
2. If there does exist such a mosque, can prayer (*ṣalāt/namāz*) be offered therein?
3. If one does offer prayer in such a mosque, will one earn merit?
4. Can such a mosque be allowed to stand?
5. Is land conquered in *Jihād* land usurped?
6. Did Bābar conquer India in general and Ayodhya in particular in *Jihād* ?
7. Does the *Sharī'ah* permit or envisage forcible replacement of an idol-temple with a mosque, such as in the case before us?
8. If not, should the mosque be allowed to stand?
9. Does the *Sharī'ah* permit or envisage destruction, relocation, or restoration to the Hindus of the mosque or the mosque-site?

Reply to the first three issues is clearly in the negative.[1] No clear verdict has come to our notice on issue No.4. Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī would be inclined to think that such mosque may be kept safe and closed.[2] But, as will transpire as we proceed, getting rid of such a mosque alone will meet the ends of Islamic justice.

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[1] *Fatāwā-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Urdu tr., Vol. IX, p.26

[2] Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī, *Da'bu 'l-Masājid fi Ādāb-i 'l-Masājid*, quoted in Mawlānā Muḥammad Zafīru 'd-Dīn, *Islām kā Niẓām-i Masājid*, p.165

So far as issue No.5 is concerned, there can be no two opinions about it: land conquered in Jihād is by no means land usurped. The Qur'ān declares that 'the earth belongs to Allāh. He causes it to be inherited by whom of his servants He will.'[1] The Prophet declares that all land belongs to Allāh or to the Prohpet himself,[2] and, let us add, through him to the Ummah (Muslim community), which the Qur'ān adjudges to be the best community (*khayr ummah*), one raised up to guide and govern humanity[3] as vicegerents (*khulafā'*) of Allāh on earth.[4] Listen, in Iqbāl's words, to what Ṭāriq bin Ziyād told his soldiers who felt homesick on the shores of Spain they had reached in a bid to conquer the land:

Har mulk mulk-i mā 'st ki mulk-i Khudā-i mā 'st

Tr.: 'All land belongs to us, because it belongs to our God.' This serves to vouchsafe to the *Ummah* the moral right to appropriate others' land in *Jihād*. Indeed, as Ibn Taymiyyah, the fourteenth-century jurist-theologian, would have it, *Jihād* serves simply to restore lands to the Muslims, who enjoy a kind of divine right over these. Thus, *Jihād*ically extorted land is far from tantamount to usurped land.

Now, reply to issue No.6 has to be in the negative. Being ruled by Ibrāhīm Lodī, Indian empire was already a *Dāru 'l-Islām*. By vanquishing and killing him on the battlefield and thereby stepping into his shoes, Bābar found India a *Dāru 'l-Islām*, he did not make it so. Bābar captured Ayodhya, too, not from the Hindus but from the Afghāns. Hence, Bābar's conquest of the Lodī empire and Afghāns' Ayodhya cannot be said to be Jihādic.

Reply to issue No. 7 is conditional: In *Jihād* (process of elimination of infidels and infidelity), yes; otherwise, not. The Qur'ān is all for uprooting infidelity, and idol-temples are the most conspicuous symbols or rather manifestations

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1. Q., Al-A 'rāf (7) 128
2. Bukhārī, II, Kitābu 'l-Jihād wa 's-Siyar, Ḥadīth 406
3. Q., Āl-'Imrān (3) 110
4. Q., An-Nūr (24) 55; an-Naml (27) 62; Al-Fāṭir (35) 39

thereof. In fact, the Qur'ān counts idol-worship (*shirk*) as the deadliest of sins (*ithm 'azīm*), which Allāh never can pardon.[1] The Prophet himself, under inspiration from on high, turned the Ka'bah into a mosque by cleansing it of all the 360 idols housed and worshipped in it.

Otherwise, the *Sharī'ah* would not permit temple-destruction, much less replacement of a temple with a mosque. As hinted above, it divides the world into *Dāru 'l-Islām* (Islam-ruled domain) and *Dāru 'l-Ḥarb* (infidel-ruled domain). Usually, *Jihād* is permissible in the second domain only. Infidels inhabiting the first domain are called *Dhimī*-s (literally, 'protected' infidels), namely such infidels as earn the right to subsist and follow their religion privately in lieu of payment of *Jizyah* and allied taxes, with attendant indignities, as subjects (not citizens) of the Muslim state.[2] The *Dhimmī*-s' life, property, and places of worship are duly protected, though they may not be permitted to build new ones.[3] According to the *Sharī'ah*, therefore, it was incumbent upon Bābar to protect the Rāma temple rather then tamper with it, such less to erect a mosque on its site, by force of arms. He was, for the same reason, a usurper and his mosque an unauthorized and illegitimate one.

But, by the same token, was the Prophet not a usurper of the Ka'bah? The Ka'bah had been the chief idol temple of the Meccan infidels for ages. They had surrendered to the Prophet without a real fight: only a handful of extremists tried in vain to put up something like a fight.[4] The Prophet took possession of the Ka'bah and did away with all the 360 idols worshipped in it, thereby turning it into a mosque. True, but the verse of Jizyah,[5] out of which the concept of *Dhimmī*-hood and all that it implies has been derived, had not been revealed till then: Mecca was conquered by the Prophet in 8 A.H. and the verse in question was revealed in

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1. Q., An-Nisā (4) 48, 116
2. Harsh Narain, *Jizyah and the Spread of Islam*, chapter II, passim
3. *Loc. cit.*
4. Ibn Hishām, II, p.483
5. Q., At-Tawbah (9) 29

9 A.H. Besides, the conquest of Ka'bah may well be treated as part of the conquest of Mecca, thanks to the indeterminate nature of the latter.

Now issue No. 8 : Should the Bābarī mosque be allowed to keep standing? The Qur'ān is there to give us guidance in the matter. Let us see what light it has to shed on the ticklish issue.

The Qur'ān, the traditions, and the Prophet's biographies refer to a mosque built by a section of his followers at Qubā' near Medinah, who petitioned the Prophet to inaugurate it by offering prayer therein. The Prophet consented to do so on return from the impending battle of Tabūk. Meanwhile he was given to understand that the builders of the mosque were traitors out to sow the seeds of dissension among his followers. So, he set fire to and destroyed the mosque. According to Ibn Hishām,[1] the earliest or rather foremost biographer of the Prophet, the Prophet thereafter received a revelation from Allāh[2] to the effect that prayer must not be offered in a mosque built from an impious motive, in a mosque of evil/harm/ misfortune (masjidan ḍirāran), for it will topple with its builders into the fire of hell and that only a mosque founded on piety (taqwā) ought to be used for the purpose.[3]

It is noteworthy that there was nothing wrong with that mosque *per se* – with its structure, with its site. Even then it had to come to grief at the hands of the Prophet himself. Should the Bābrī mosque built by usurping the *Dhimmī*-s' temple fare any better? This pious precedent set by the Qur'ān should settle the matter once for all. Hence, answer to issue No. 8 is bound to be in the negative.

It is further noteworthy that the destruction of the *Masjidu 'ḍ-Ḍirār*, as the mosque in the above illustration has come to be known, is not known to have been followed by construction of another mosque on its site, which means that

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1. Ibn Hishām, II, pp.635-636
2. Q., At-Tawbah (9) 107-110
3. Ibn Hishām, II, pp. 635-636

the much-publicised eternally inviolable sacrosanctity of the mosque-site *per se* even when it falls vacant has no *Sharī'ah* legs to stand upon.

Well, there are other precedents, too, to go upon. The Umayyād caliph 'Umar bin 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz got a church restored to the Christians out of the hands of the Muslims of Banū Naṣr.[1] He created a more glaring precedent in another case. When Mu'āwiyyah bin Abū Sufyān became caliph, he intended to include the church of John in the mosque of Damascus; but the Christians did not agree. Caliph 'Abdu 'l-Malik bin Marwān in his own turn offered a lot of wealth for the church, but the Christians would not agree again. Finding them adamant, caliph al-Walid bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik threatened them with dismantling the church by force. He was also provoked by a Christian's remark that the caliph's attempt to dismantle it would turn him mad and involve him in trouble. Then the caliph damaged part of the church himself and got it dismantled by engaging labour. He also extended the mosque enough to cover its site in toto. When 'Umar bin 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz succeeded them, the Christians petitioned him and he ordered restoration of the church-site to them. Upon this, the great theologian Sulaymān bin Ḥabību 'l-Muḥāribiyy persuaded the Christians to forgo their demand and, in lieu thereof, get back all the churches of Al-Ghūṭ conquered in a holy war (*'anwatan*). The caliph approved of the compromise formula and action was taken accordingly.[2]

Yet another precedent: During the caliphate of Mahdī, 'Alī bin Sulaymān, governor of Egypt, dismantled a number of churches including one of Mary. But, during the caliphate of Hārunu 'r-Rashīd, the new governor Mūsā bin 'Īsā 'Abdāsī restored them all.[3] In fact, the great Arab historian Maqrīzī tells the tale of several other such churches.

The upshot of all this is that our answer to issue No.8 must be negative. This also indicates the answer to issue

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[1] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥu 'l-Buldān*, p.189

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191

[3] Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, Vol. IV, p.424

No.9, the last issue. That is, destruction, relocation, and restoration to the Hindus of the Bābarī mosque would be quite in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Sharī'ah.

As a matter of fact, demolition of Muslim shrines or their reconstruction even on new foundations is not unknown to and unrecognized by official Islam. It is said, for example, that the Ka'bah itself, of which the Prophet holds other mosques to be daughters (*banāt*), was dismantled more than once and even in disregard of its original foundations. Five years before the anointment of Muḥammad as prophet, the Quraysh rebuilt the Ka'bah of wood on new foundations and the Prophet participated therein. The new building was demolished by caliph 'Abdullāh bin Zubayr in 63-64 A.H. and reconstructed on its old foundations. The newer building, too, underwent demolition at the behest of caliph 'Abdu 'l-Malik bin Marwān and restored to the foundations laid by the Quraysh.[1] In fact, reports Bakhārī, the Prophet had a mind to rebuild it on its original foundations but had to desist from it for fear of being misunderstood.[2]

Here we cannot resist the temptation of alluding to two Indian examples of restoration to the Hindus of temples turned into mosque. Firishtah reports that Akbar ordered replacement of the mosque at the Asir fort with a temple (presumably because the mosque had earlier displaced a temple); although his son prince Dāniyāl did not carry out the order.[3] Another, rather more relevant example is that of the otherwise fanatic Shāh Jahāṅ. It is on record (*Akhbārāt*, 9th year, sheets 49 ff.) that as governor of Gujarat Aurangzīb converted the Jaina temple of Cintāmaṇi Pārśvanātha, built by the Jaina business magnate Shāntidās Jauharī at Saraspur off Ahmedabad, into a mosque, named it Masjid-i Quwwatu 'l-Islām,[4] and got a cow slaughtered therein.[5] But, on

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1. Mawlānā Muḥammad 'Abdu 'r-Rashīd Nu'mānī, *Lughātu 'l-Qur'ān*, Vol. V, p.155
2. Bukhāhrī, I, Kitābu 'l-Manāsik Hadīths 1484-1485
3. *Firishtah*, Vol. II, p.839
4. *Mir'at-i Aḥmadī*, I, p. 220
5. Thevenot, *Travels into the Indies*, p.10. Also see M.S. Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, Oxford etc., 1931, pp. 23-25; *Studies*

complaint by Mullā 'Abdu'l-Ḥakimi,[1] Shāh Jahāṅ handed the temple back to Shantidas after 1647. (See Shāh Jahān's farmān in Appendix VI) It is a different matter, however, that on coming to power Aurangzib revoked the imperial decree, with these words: 'The dismantled temples which have of late been repaired be pulled down (*butkhānah-hā-i munhadimah rā ki al-ḥāl marammat numūdah and bi-andāzand*).[2]

On a visit to Riyadh and Jaddah at the invitation of the Su'ūdī government, Mr. Inder Jit found that mosques, however big or historic, were shifted or demolished, nor were graves allowed to pose any problem, in order just to replan, modernize, and beautify the Su'ūdī capital of Riyadh. In fact, there are many sources to confirm such a report.[3]

Well, the spirit of Islam has always to be kept in view. The Qur'ān is all for uprooting infidelity. The Prophet himself had been engaged in doing so all his life. All is fair in *Jihād*–slaughter, plunder, rape, enslavement, desecration and destruction of temples, conversion by force, etc. It is preposterous to assume that *Jihād* is just a defensive warfare. What could be the relation between defence and breaking idols? Or between defence and conquest, rather world-conquest? Nevertheless, once infidels accept subjection and payment of *Jizyah*, *'Ushur*, pilgrimage tax, etc., they become *Dhimmī*-s and are permitted to retain their places of worship, though they may not be permitted to build new ones. If some Muslim deprives them of their temples etc., restoration thereof to them is a must by *Sharī'ah* as well as by pious precedent.

To conclude: Capture of Delhi and Ayodhya by Bābar was not an act of *Jihād* on his part. It was a case of simple conquest of a secular nature. India was a *Dāru 'l-Islām* from before Bābar: Bābar did not make it so. Likewise, the Hindus were *Dhimmī*'s from before Bābar: Bābar did not make them so.

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in the History of Gujarat, p. 56

[1] M.S. Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat*, p.58

[2] Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan alias 'Alī Muḥammad Khān, *Mir'at-i Aḥmadī*, Vol.I, pp. 259-260

[3] Inder Jit, 'A Lesson from Islamic History', the *Pioneer*, October 2, 1990

Hence, their temples were, in terms of the *Sharī'ah*, entitled to proection rather than destruction by him. Therefore, in replacing the Rāma temple by the mosque in question, Bābar can be held guilty of violating the *Sharī'ah*. Righting the wrong done should brook no delay. The *Sharī'ah* is rather more exacting than the laws of other religions. If really followed, therefore, the wrong will be righted in the twinkling of an eye.

14

OPENING OUT HISTORICAL WOUNDS ?

History is not, cannot be, and must not be a record of goody-goody things: it is bound to be a record of things good, bad, and indifferent. Trouble starts when a section of people begin to identify themselves with idealize tyrants, ghāzī-s, and suchlike to the entire neglect and sometimes to the wholesale condemation of those who strained every nerve to achieve national integration or defend national honour. Today every 'secularist' is out to whitewash the anti-Hindu image of Aurangzībs and Ṭīpū-s and consign Sulṭān Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn of Kashmir (1420-1470), Sulṭān Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh II of Bījāpur (1580-1627), emperor Jalālu 'd-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar (1556-1605) in his later phases, and Prince Dārā Shukoh (d. 1659) to the folds of oblivion. Europe has had its share of religious tyrants, but nobody holds a brief for them excepting the negationists for the Nazis, with the result that today there is hardly any animosity between the Catholics and Protestants, between religious and scientific establishments. They do not go about finding fault with history. They take lesson from history and live in peace.

In fact, it is never too late to mend, and right the wrong done to a nation and continuing to prove an eyesore to it. The Osmanli Turks converted Constantinople's great Cathedral of Santa Sophia into a mosque named Apa Suphiạ in 1453. The Cathedral had been the centre of the Greek Orthodox Church for nine hundred years and the greatest achievement of Byzantine art. Kamāl Atāturk took the earliest opportunity to right the historical wrong by converting the mosque into a museum of Byzántine glory.

Likewise, when, after the Napoleonic wars, the Czarist

Russia occupied Poland, they built a Greek Orthodox Church in the heart of Roman Catholic Warsaw. But, on regaining its freedom after World War I, Poland promptly demolished the Russian Church. Arnold J. Toynbee drew pointed attention to this fact in his Azad Memorial Lectures in New Delhi in 1950 and remarked that Muslim monuments still standing on hoary holy Hindu sites could only excerbate Hindu-Muslim feelings.

The medieval Muslim rulers hit Hindus upon every nerve centre, so that it is difficult to decide from where to begin the tale of their suffering. As the Urdu poet says :

Ek do zakhm nahīṅ sārā jigar hai chhalanī
Dard bechārā parīshāṅ hai kahāṅ se uṭṭhe

Tr.: 'The question is not of one wound or two, the whole heart has become a sieve, so that pain is at a loss from where to arise.' Writes the German historian Wilhelm von Pochhammer, in his classic *India's Road to Nationhood*: 'The immense and uncontrollable blood-baths, the brutality with which civilian populations were massacred and women and girls were dragged into "harems" which to the Hindus appeared as no better than brothels, the introduction of a slave trade in which thousands of people including children were sold; all these generated a hatred for foreigners, the like of which had never been felt by Indians before. The hatred was increased by the shameless way in which the foreigners destroyed holy places after having first defiled them in the most senseless way.'[1] As indicated at the very outset of this work, such desecrations and destructions took place by tens of thousands. With a view just not to opening out all these historical wounds, the Hindus demand a symbolical restoration of only three of them. 'Is that too much to ask?', queries Mr. M.V.Kamath. He continues: 'Is it too much to ask of the Syed Shahabuddins and the Shahi Imams to show some respect for the wounded sensibilities of Hindus? Has grace been lost for ever from the Muslim ethos? Why should it always have to be Hindus who must give in?'[1] Mr. Kamath also observes: 'Muslim leaders want Hindus to forget the past in the grand gesture of reconciliation, as if it is the duty of the victims to show magnanimity and forgiveness. There is not a word or whisper from Muslim leaders by way of apology to what their ancestors did to the Hindus in the past, only a show of arrogance and defiance'.[2]

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[1] Wilhelm von Pochhammer, *India's Road to Nationhood*, p. 276

It has also to be borne in mind that the Hindus' claim upon the Bābarī mosque deserves to be understood by the Muslims on the pattern of the Prophet's claim upon the Ka'bah. According to the Qur'ān, the Ka'bah is as old as at least Abraham and Ishmael, who built or rebuilt it as the house of Allāh.[3] Abraham preceded the Prophet by some 2700 years. The Prophet's taking forcible possession of the Ka'bah is sought to be justified on the plea that it was originally the house of Allāh, not of idols. Likewise, the Hindus believe that the Bābarī mosque was originally a house of idols of Rāma, Sītā, and suchlike for less then half a millennium. Hence, they argue, it belongs to them and should be restored to them. Therefore, it does not lie in the mouth of the followers of the Prophet to find fault with the Hindus' claim over the Bābarī mosque.

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1. M.V.Kamath, 'Mandir-Masjid Dispute: Not Merely a Question of Law', the *Pioneer*, October 25, 1991
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. Q., Al-Baqarah (2) 127

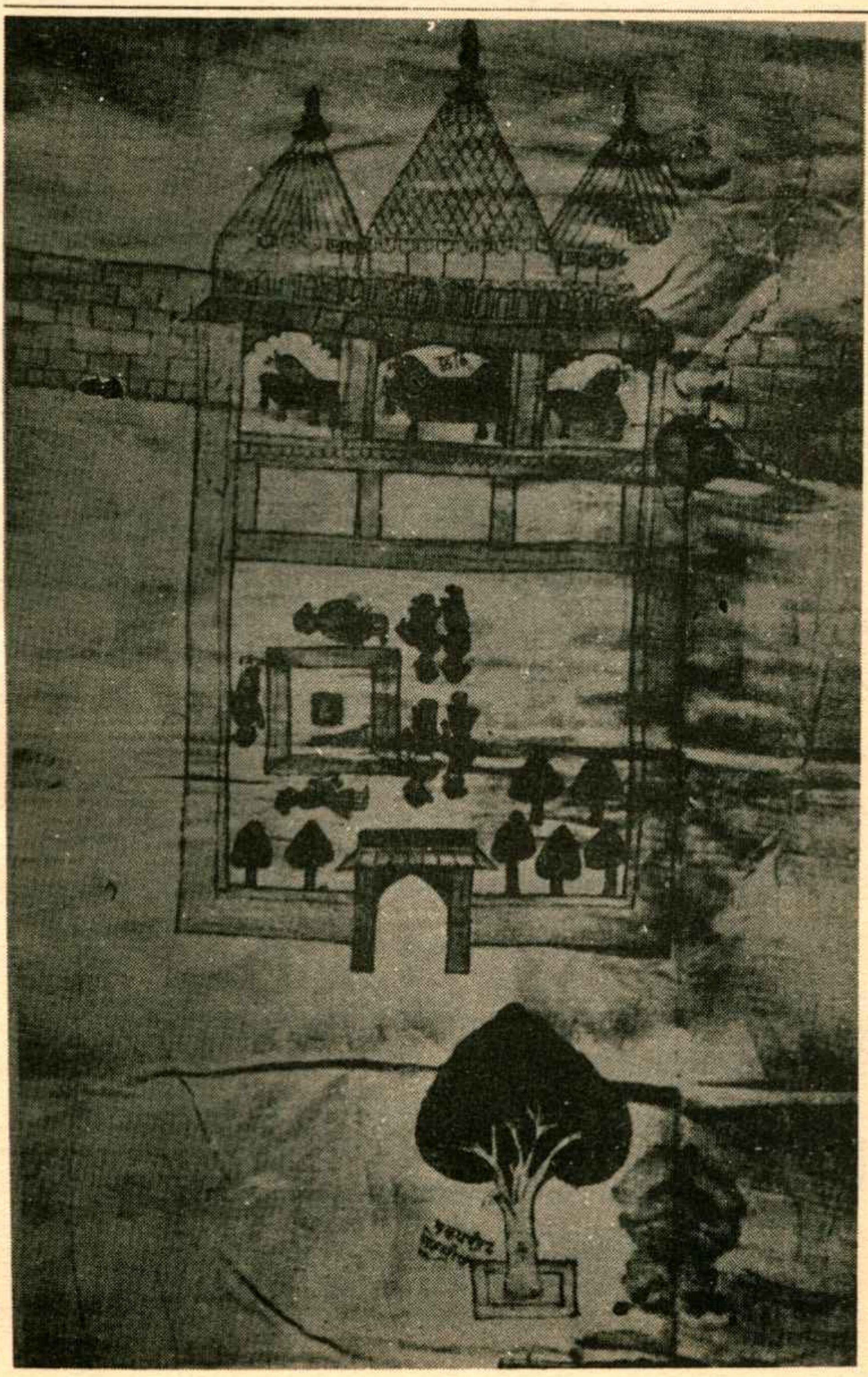
Appendix I

Extract from Hakīm 'Abdu 'l-Hayy, *Al-Hind-u fi'l - 'Ahd-i ' l-Islāmiyy*

و منها المسجد الكبير الذى بناه بابر شاه التيمورى ببلدة «اجودهيا» المقدسة فى زعم الهنادك لأجل «رام چندر»، الذى يزعمونه مظهر الألوهية، وهو ولد بها، وله قصة طويلة بزوجته «سيتا»، وكانت فى تلك البلدة كنيسة عظيمة لهم فى مكان تجلس به «سيتا»، و تطبخ الطعام لبعلها، فهدمها بابر شاه المذكور، و أسَّسَ مكانها مسجدا من الحجارة المنحوتة سنة ٩٢٣ هـ.

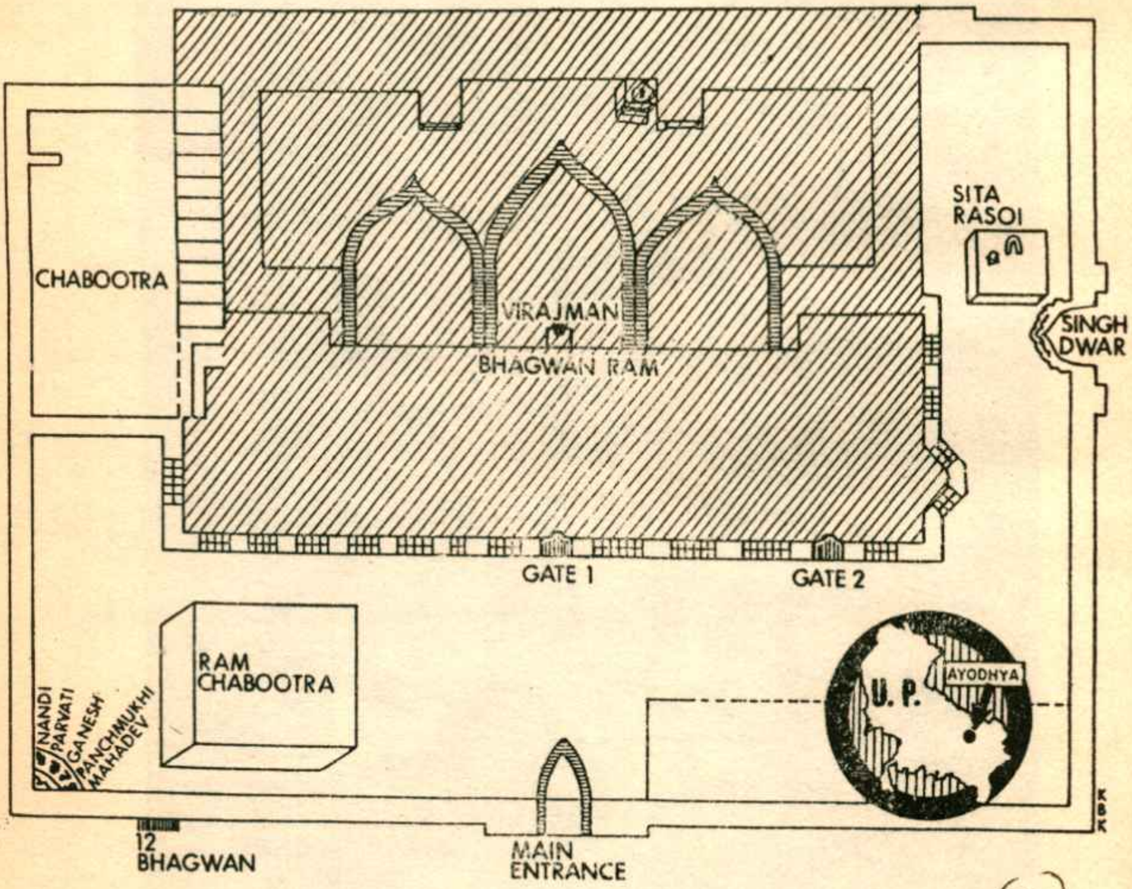
Appendix II

Map of Janmasthan in 1717 A.D. (Kapad-Dwār Collection of the S.M.S. II, City Palace Museum, Jaipur)



Appendix III

Sketch of the Rāma Janmabhūmi at Ayodhya, 1889


CHABOOTRA
VIRAJMAN
BHAGWAN RAM
SITA RASOI
SINGH DWAR
GATE 1
GATE 2
RAM CHABOOTRA
NANDI
PARVATI
GANESH
PANCHMUKHI MAHADEV
U. P.
AYODHYA
12 BHAGWAN
MAIN ENTRANCE
KBK

(92)

EXTRACTS FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN THE
YEAR 1889

Appendix IV

Bābur's Last Testament

۹۳۳ھ

بہادر غازی
شاہ
ظہیرالدین محمد بابر باد

وصیت نامہ مخفی ظہیرالدین محمد بابر بادشاہ غازی بشاہزادہ نصیرالدین محمد ہمایوں ظل اللہ
در استحکام سلطنت نوشتہ شدای فرزند ملکت ہندوستان از مذاہب مختلف
ماموراست ۔ بحمد اللہ کہ حق سبحانہ تعالے بادشاہی آں چنوں کرامت نمود باید کہ تعصبات
مذہبی را از لوح دل پاک نمودہ موافق طریق ہر ملت معدلت کن خصوصاً از قربانی گاؤ
بہ پرہیز کہ تسخیر قلوب اہل ہندوستانست و رعیت ایں ولایت بامعفاتات بادشاہی
وابستہ شود و منادر و معبد گاہ ہر قومیکہ زیر فرمان بادشاہی ست خراب مکن چناں
عدل گستری اختیار کن کہ شاہ از رعیت و رعیت از بادشاہ آسودہ شود ۔ ترقی اسلام از
تیغ احسان بہتراست نہ کہ از تیغ ظلم و از منا نقات اہل سنت و شیعہ چشم پوشی کن
والا ضعف اسلام موجود است و رعیت مختلف القلوب را بحکم اربعہ عناصر قائم کن
کہ جسم سلطنت از امراض مختلفہ ایمن باشد و کارنامۂ حضرت امیر تیمور صاحبقرانی پیش باید
روز و شب کہ بامور شہریاری پختہ شود ۔

I am thankful to the National Archives for a photostat copy in its possession. Dr. Tirnusi helped me in deciphering the text and also confirm the evaluation of this document I had made in the first edition of my *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* in 1940. I am grateful to him and to the Director for the facilities provided in this connection. (Sri Ram Sharma).

Appendix V

The Real Will of Bābar

Abu' l-Faḍl, *Akbar-Namah*, Vol. I Allahabad, n.d., p. 135

ابوالفضل، اکبرنامہ، جلد ۱، الہ آباد، بلا تاریخ اشاعت

۔ فی الفور حرارت غریبہ عارض بدن آنحضرت شد در عنصر حضرت جہانبانی خفتے طاری گشت چنانچہ در اندک فرصتے صحت کامل روے نمود و ذات معلیٰ صفات حضرت گیتی ستانی فردوس مکانی زمان زمان گران تر میشد تا بحدے رسید کہ اختلال در مزاج تزاید و تضاعف گرفت و امارات رحلت و انتقال از وجنات حال ہویدا گشت تا آنکہ با دل بیدار و باطن حقیقت بین ارکان دولت و اعیان سلطنت را احضار فرمودہ دست بیعت خلافت را بر دست ہمایونی نہادہ بجانشینی و ولیعہدی خود نصب فرمودند و بر تخت خلافت جلوس دادہ خود در پایۂ سریر خلافت مصیر صاحب فراش گشتند۔ خواجہ خلیفہ و قنبر علی بیگ و تردی بیگ و ہندو بیگ و جمع کثیر در ملازمت حضرت بودند نصائح بلند و وصایاے گرامی کہ سرمایۂ دولت ابدی و پیرایۂ سعادت جاودانی تواند بود بجاے آوردند و بداد و دہش و عدل و احسان و تحصیل رضاے الٰہی و رعایت رعایا و نگہبانی خلائق و عذر پذیرفتن مقصران و گذراندن جرائم گنہگاران و رعایت مجرم کارآگہان و از پا انداختن سرکشان و ستم گاران رہنمونی فرمودند و بر زبان اقدس راندند کہ خلاصۂ وصایاے ما آنست کہ قصد برادران مکنید ہرچند سزاوار آن گردند و الحق پاس انفاس وصیت آنحضرت بود کہ حضرت جہانبانی جنت آشیانی چندیں جفاہا از اخوان کشیدند و بانتقام نکوشیدند۔

Appendix VI

Shāh Jahān's Farmān

(M.S. Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat*, Ahmedabad, 1987, pp.55-59)

Shantidas builds a great temple at Ahmedabad, 1621

The most important event in the early period of the career of Shantidas was no doubt the commencement in the year 1621 (Saṁvat 1678) of the magnificent Jain temple dedicated to Chintamani-Parshwanath in a suburb of Ahmadabad. The edifice must have been completed four years later in 1625, for in this year Shantidas is said to have formally installed therein the image of the Tirthankar. The temple is said to have been called Manatunga.[1] It was situated in the then flourishing suburb of Bibipur, which is now known as Saraspur, and the sacred monument was erected jointly by Shantidas and his elder brother Vardhaman. It is a matter for no small regret that while the great Muslim monuments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at Ahmadabad still remain in almost perfect condition, this great Jain temple, built in the seventeenth century, has practically disappeared owing to reasons which we shall describe later.

Mandelslo's account of the temple, 1638

Though Shantidas's temple at Saraspur is now no more, an elaborate account of the same has been, strangely enough, preserved in the work of a young German traveller in Gujarat, Albert de Mandelslo, who visited Ahmadabad in 1638, i.e., within twelve years of the completion of the famous temple. He informs us that it was without dispute one of the noblest structures that could be seen in this city and adds that it was at the time of his visit new, 'for the Founder, who was a rich Banya merchant named Shantidas, was living in my time'. According to his description, the temple stood in the centre of a large court which was enclosed by a high stone wall. At its entrance there stood two elephants[1] of black marble 'done to the life' and upon one of them was placed the effigy of the builder. The temple building was vaulted and its walls adorned with human and animal figures. About it were the usual cloisters with cells each containing a marble statue, in white or black, representing the Tirthankars of the Jain Pantheon, though our traveller, like many others, thought them to be images of women, naked, sitting cross-legged ![2]

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[1] For the description of the temple given in the *Chintamani-prashasti* see Appendix B at the end of this chapter.

Prince Aurangzeb converts the temple into a mosque, 1645

In 1645, Prince Aurangzeb, then Viceory of Gujarat under his father Shah Jahan, ordered the beautiful temple built by Shantidas at the suburb of Saraspur to be desecrated and it was converted into a mosque under the name of Quvvat-ul-Islam (the Might of Islam).[3] The meagre reference to this event in the Mirat-i-Ahmadi may be supplemented by a quotation from the French traveller M.de Thevenot, who visited Ahmadabad in 1666. He says :-

Thevenot's account of the desecration

"Ahmedabad being inhabited also by a great numbers of heathens, there are Pagods or idol-temples in it. That which was called the Pagod of Santidas was the chief, before Aurangzeb converted it into a mosque. When he performed that ceremony he caused a cow to be killed in the place, knowing very well that, after such an action the gentiles according to their law, could worship no more therein. All round the temple there is a cloister furnished with lovely cells, beautified with figures of marble in relief, representing naked women sitting after the oriental fashion. The inside roof of the mosque is pretty enough and the walls are full of the figures of men and beasts; but Aurangzed, who hath always made a show of an affected devotion, which at length raised him to the throne, caused the noses of all these figures, which added a great deal of magnificence to that mosque, to be beat off."[1]

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[1] Their names are given as Vaghaji and Kalyanmal in the *Chintamaniprashasti*, verse 44.

[2] 'Mandelslo's Travels into the East Indies,' translated by J.Davies, London, 1662, p.30; See also Commissariat, M.S., *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India* (1931), pp.23-25. For the full text of Mandelslo's account of the temple see Appendix C to this chapter.

[3] *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Pers. Text, ed. by Syed Nawab Ali, Part 1.

Tavernier's reference to the Temple

The famous French jeweller and traveller, M.Tavernier, who paid many visits to Ahmadabad in the course of his travels, is evidently referring to the Jain temple built by Shantidas when he says :-

"There was a Pagoda in this place which the Muhammadans took possession of in order to turn it into a mosque. Before entering it you traverse three great courts paved with marble, and surrounded by galleries, and you are not allowed to place foot in the third without removing your shoes. The exterior of the mosque is ornamented with mosaic, the greater part of which consists of agates of different colours, obtained from the mountains of Cambay, only two days' journey from thence."[2]

Shah Jahan restores the temple to Shantidas

It is not probable that so powerful a citizen and so devout a Jain as Shantidas would allow this insult offered even by an Imperial Prince to a monument built at such immense cost and dedicated to one of the Supreme Souls of the Jain religion to pass witout making a represenation to the Emperor. This may be permised from the grant of an Imperial farman, dated July 3, 1648, about three years after the Prince's viceroyalty, directing Ghairat Khan and other officials in Gujarat to restore the building to Shantidas and to make him complete restitution for all damage done. This most valuable historical document was in 1888 submitted by the then Nagarsheth

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1. *Travels of M.de Thevenot*, trans. by Lovell, London, 1687, Part III, p.10.
2. J.B.Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Ed. by Ball, I, 72.

Premabhai Hemabhai to the Superintendent of the Revenue Survey at Ahmadabad for inspection.[1] But all traces of it were forgotten for about half a century until the author was able, after much labour, to locate it in the possession of Sheth Kasturbhai Manibhai, the grandson of Premabhai, at the end of 1932, in a long neglected bundle containing several other valuable farmans.

Ghairat Khan as deputy for Dara in Gujarat

This farman bears at its top the seal of Dara Shukoh and was granted on the 21st of Jumad-as-Sani of the Hijri year 1058 (July 3, 1648), being addressed to the officers of the Subah of Gujarat, and especially to Ghairat Khan, on whom special epithets of praise and regard are bestowed. The date is interesting, for we learn from the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* that on this day the Emperor appointed his eldest son Dara as Viceory of Gujarat in succession to Shaistah Khan who had been transferred.[2] But Dara's appointment was a nominal one, for he was allowed to remain at court and to carry on the government of his province by sending this Ghairat Khan as his *naib* or deputy to Ahmadabad. It is possible, therefore, that the farman was delivered to the latter on this day. As the farman has never been published before, we give below a full translation of the same :

Toghra (in golden ink) : Farman-i- Abul Muzaffar Shihab-ud-din Muhammad Sahib Kiran-i-Sani Shah Jahan Badshah-i-Ghazi.

Nishan : Nishan-i-Alishan Shahzada Buland Iqbal Muhammad Dara Shukoh.

Seal (in black) Muhammad Dara Shukoh *ibn* Shah Jahan Badshah Ghazi.

Shah Jahan's farman for the restoration of the temple, 3 July, 1648

'Be it known to the governors, subahdars and mutasaddis, present and future, of the province of Gujarat, especially the one who has been worthy of various favours (*here follow*

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[1] *Jain Aitihasic Rasmala*, Ed. by Mohanlal D. Desai, Part I, 30.

[2] *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Persian text, Ed. by Nawab Ali, Part I,224.

various honorific epithets), viz, Ghairat Khan, who has been reliant on and gladdened by royal favours, that formerly, in respect of the temple of the leading person of the time (*zubdat-al-akran*), Satidas Jawahari, an exalted and blessed order had been issued to Umdat-ul-Mulk Shaistah Khan to this effect : Shahzada Sultan Aurangzeb Bahadur had constructed in that place some mihrabs (prayer-arches) and had given it the name of a mosque ; and after that Mulla Abdul Hakim had represented to His Majesty that this building, by reason of its being the property of another person, could not be considered a mosque according to the inviolable Islamic law; a world-obeyed order, therefore, obtained the honour of being issued that this building is the property pf Satidas, and that because of the mihrab which the famous Prince had made in that place the above-mentioned person should not be harassed, and that the arch should be removed and the aforesaid building should be handed over to him.

'Now, at this time, the world-obeyed and illustrious order has been issued that the mihrab which the victorious and exalted Prince has constructed may be retained and a wall be built near the same as a screen between the temple and the mihrab. Hence it is ordained that, since his exalted Majesty has, as an act of favour, granted the aforesaid temple to Satidas, he should be in possession of it as as before and he may worship there according to his creed in any way he likes, and no one should obstruct or trouble him; also that some of the Faqirs (beggars) who have made their abode in that place should be turned out, and Satidas should be relieved from the troubles and quarrels on their account.

'And since it has been represented to His Majesty that some of the Bohras have removed and carried away the materials of that temple, in the event of this being so, those materials should be got back from them and should be restored to the person referred to above (Satidas), and if the aforesaid materials have been used up, their price should be recovered from them and should be paid to Satidas.

'In this matter, this order should be considered extremely urgent and there should be no deviation from or disobedience to it. Written on the twenty-first of the month of Jumad-as-Sani in the year 1058 H. (July 3, 1648)'[1]

* * *

The images of this temple again set up in 1743

From a later reference to this temple in the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* we learn that, at the time of its conversion into a mosque by Sultan Aurangzeb, two of the marble images, each weighing a hundred *man*, had been buried underground by Shantidas, though it was given out that these would be destroyed. In 1743, when the Emperor Mahammad Shah was on the throne of Delhi, and the Subah of Gujarat was given to Fakhrudin Khan, who governed through Jawanmard Khan as his deputy, these idols were again publicly set up at Ahmadabad. The historian says that 'marking the weakness of Islam and the decline of religious zeal' at this period, the descendants of Shantidas obtained, by means of a *douceur*, permission to bring these images on carts into the city where they were installed for public worship in an underground temple which had been in existence for a long time and where the Jains used in secret to carry on their worship owing to the fear of the Musalmans.[2]

Farman of 1629 about Jain temples and *poshals*

We may now refer to an imperial Mughal farman granted to Shantidas by Shah Jahan in the early years of his reign in which the Emperor makes certain grants which are different in their nature from those Palitana grants which are the subject of several well-known farmans of a later date. This farman, now in the possession of the firm of Sheth Anandji Kalyanji, was written on the 21st May of the Ilahi month of Adar in the second year of the coronation, i.e., in 1629-30. The document states that it had been brought to the notice of His Majesty that the temples of 'Chintaman' and 'Satrunja'

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1. The reverse of this Farman contains the following brief endorsement : 'through the humblest of servants, Biharimal.'
2. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Persian text, Ed. by Syed Nawab Ali, Part 2, p.322.

and 'Sankhesara'[1] and 'Kesari'[2] were in the existence long before the suspicious accession, and that there were three *poshals*[3] at Ahmadabad, four at Khambayat, one at Surat and one at Radhanpur in the possession of Shantidas. The order was, therefore, now issued to the effect that no one should put up at those places and houses for they had been granted to the Jains.

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[1] Sankhesvar is situated near Panchasar in the district of Munipur, 24 miles south of Radhanpur in North Gujarat. It is still a famous place of Jain pilgrimage, but the present temples are modern and raised on the site of old buildings that have quite disappeared. (Bombay Gazetteer, V.347) The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* described this temple as 'Sankh Parasnath, situated in pargana Munipur, Sarkar Patan'. (Nawab Ali and Seddon, *Suppt*.139).

[2] The temple of Kesharianath, sacred to Adinath or Rishabhdev, is situated in the village of Dhuleva, about 36 miles from the city of Udaipur in the state of the same name.

[3] A *poshal* is a place where a Jain stays when keeping his *posha* vow, one of the four disciplinary vows of the Jains (*cf. Sanskrit, Uposhatha-Shala*).

Appendix VII

A CONTROVERSY OVER THE TEMPLE-MOSQUE

Indian Express, Monday Feb. 26, 1990, p.8

Ram Janmabhoomi temple : Muslim testimony

All relevant British government records followed by the District Gazetteer Faizabad compiled and published by the Congress government in 1960 declare with one voice that the so-called Babari mosque at Ayodhya is standing on the debris of a Ramjanmasthan temple demolished by the order of Babar in 1528. Syed Shahabuddin, JNU historians, and self-styled 'secular' scholars and leaders are hotly contesting the proposition, contending that the existence and demolition of such a temple is a myth floated by the British in pursuance of their policy of 'divide and rule'. Syed Shahabuddin and many Muslim divines go a step further and assert that neither Babar nor any other Muslim for that matter would take it into his head to erect a mosque by displacing a temple, for, they argue, such a mosque would not be a mosque in the eye of the Shari'ah and would be liable to demolition by the Muslims themselves.

With this idea in mind, Syed Shahabuddin is going about proclaiming that, if it is shown independently of the British sources that the Babari mosque has displaced a temple, he would pull it down with his own hands and hand it over to the Hindus.

The challenge is worth taking, and I hereby do it with good grace, on behalf of those who place truth above politics.

Well, granting for the nonce that the Babari mosque cannot be shown to have displaced a temple, there are certain other mosques which can indisputably be shown to have done so. Is Syed Shahabuddin prepared to keep his word in the case of such mosques? It is common knowledge that most of the mosques built by the Muslim invaders stand on land grabbed or extorted from the Kafirs. And what about the Ka'bah itself?

Sayyid Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, the well known Muslim historian who died in an accident recently, modifies the stand of the Muslim divines thus: 'It is also thinkable that some mosque was erected close to or at a short distance from a temple demolished for some special reason, but never was a mosque built on the site of a temple anywhere.' [See his *Babri Masjid* (3rd print, Azamgarh: Darul Musannifin Shibli Academy 1987), p.19].

As regards the verdict of the Shari'ah it is true that there are theologico-juristic rulings to the effect that no mosque can be built on land grabbed or illegally/illegitimately acquired. See for example the great *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, Urdu Trn. Vol.IX, p.26. But the question is, 'Do they hold true for land acquired in Jihad as well?' The answer has to be an emphatic 'No'. The Prophet has made it clear that all land belongs to God or himself (*A'lamu anna 'l-arza li' llah-i wa rasul-i-hi*), and, obviously, through the Prophet to the Muslims (Bukhari, II, Kitab al-Jihad wa 's-Siyar, Hadith 406). Iqbal puts the following words, in a Persian verse, into the mouth of Tariq, the great conqueror of Spain : *Har mulk mulk-i ma' st ki mulk-i Khuda-i-ma 'st*. That is, all land belongs to the Muslims, because it belongs to their God. Ibn Taymiyyah, the 14th century theologian and jurist, argues that Jihad simply restores lands to the Muslims, to whom they rightly belong. This serves to vouchsafe to them the moral right to extort lands in Jihad and others.

Thus, the argument from the Shari'ah has no leg to stand upon.

Now, I proceed to cite certain purely Muslim sources beyond the sphere of British influence to show that the Babari mosque has displaced a Hindu temple – the Ramjanmasthan temple, to be precise – wholly or partly.

First, an indirect evidence. In an application dated November 30, 1858, filed by one Muhammad Asghar, Khatib and Mu'azzin, Babari Masjid, to initiate legal proceeding against 'Bairagiyan-i Janmasthan', the Babari mosque has been called 'masjid-i Janmasthan' and the courtyard near the arch and the pulpit within the boundary of the mosque, 'maqam Janmasthan ka'. The Bairagis had raised a platform in the courtyard which the applicant wanted to be dismantled. He has mentioned that the place of Janmasthan had been lying unkempt/in disorder (*parishan*) for hundreds of years and that the Hindus performed worship there (*maqam Janmasthan ka sad-ha baras se parishan para rahta tha. Ahl-i Hunud puja karte they*). See Sayyid Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, *op.cit.*, pp.29-30. Well, if the Babari mosque is the Janmasthan mosque, its courtyard is the Janmasthan, and the Hindus had all along been carrying out their worship and all that it implies there, there must have been some construction there as part of a (Janmasthan) temple, which Mīr Bāqī partly demolished and partly converted into the existing Babari mosque, with or without Babar's approval. And the Hindus had no alternative but to make do with the temple-less courtyard. Otherwise, it is simply unthinkable that they might have been performing worhsip for such a long time and on such a sacred place without a proper temple.

Failure of Jihad

My second document is the *Hadiqah-i Shuhada* by one Mirza Jan, an eyewitness as well as active participant in the Jihad led by Amir Ali Amethawi during Wajid Ali Shah's regime in 1855 for recapture of Hanuman Garhi (a few hundred yards from the Babari mosque) from the Hindus. The book was ready just after the failure of the Jihad and saw the light of day in the following year, viz. in 1856, at Lucknow. Ra'is Ahmad Jafari has included it as chapter IX in his book entitled *Wajid Ali Shah aur Un-ka-Ahd* (Lucknow: Kitab

Manzil, 1957), after, however, omitting what he considered unnecessary but without adding a word from his side.

Now, let us see what information we gather from it, germane to our enquiry. Mirza Jan states that 'wherever they found magnificent temples of the Hindus ever since the establishment of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi's rule, the Muslim rulers in India built mosques, monasteries, and inns, appointed mu'azzins, teachers, and store-stewards, spread Islam vigorously, and vanquished the Kafirs. Likewise, they cleared up Faizabad and Avadh, too, from the filth of reprobation (infidelity), because it was a great centre of worship and capital of Rama's father. Where there stood the great temple (of Ramajanmasthan), there they built a big mosque, and where there was a small *mandap* (pavilion), there they erected a camp mosque (*masjid-i mukhasar-i qanati*). The Janmasthan temple is the principal place of Rama's incarnation, adjacent to which is the *Sita ki Rasoi*. Hence what a lofty mosque was built there by king Babar in 923 A.H. (1528 A.D.), under the patronage of Musa Ashiqan! The mosque is still known far and wide as the *Sita ki Rasoi* mosque. And that temple is extant by its side (*aur pahlu mein wah dair baqi hai*). (p.246)

It must be borne in mind that Mirza Jan claims to write all this on the basis of older records (*kutub-i sabiqah*) and contemporary accounts.

My third document is a chapter of the *Muraqqah-i-Khusrawi*, otherwise known as the Tarikh-i Avadh, by Shaikh Azamat Ali Kakorwi Nami (1811-1893), who happened to be an eyewitness to much that happened during Wajid Ali Shah's regime. The work was completed in 1869 but could not see the light of day for over a century. Only one manuscript of it is extant and that is in the Tagore Library of Lucknow University. A press copy of it was prepared by Dr. Zaki Kakorawi for publication with the financial assistance of the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad Memorial Committee, U.P., Lucknow. The committee vetoed the publication of its chapter dealing with the Jihad led by Amir Ali Amethawi for recapture of Hanuman Garhi from the Bairagis, from its funds, on the ground that its publication would not be opportune in view of the prevailing political situation, with the result that Dr Kakorawi had to publish the book minus that chapter in 1986, for the first time. Later, however, he published the chapter separately and independently of any financial or other assistance from the committe in 1987 from the Markaz-i Adab-i Urdu 137, Shahganj, Lucknow-3, under the title *Amir Ali Shahid aur Ma'rakah-i Hanuman Garhi.*

It is a pity that, thanks to our thoughtless 'secularism' and waning sense of history, such primary source of medieval Indian history are presently in danger of suppression or total extinction. Dr. Kakorawi himself laments that 'suppression of any part of any old composition or compilation like this can create difficulties and misunderstandings for future historians and researches.' (p.3)

Well, what light does our author, Shaikh Muhammad Azamat Ali Kakorawi Nami, have to throw on the issue of demolition versus non-existence of the Janmasthan temple? The opening paragraph of his book is akin to the passage quoted above from Mirza Jan's *Hadiqah-i Shuhada*. I give below the paragraph in the author's own words, omitting very few deatils: 'According to old records, it has been a rule with the Muslim rulers from the first to build mosques, monasteries, and inns, spread Islam, and put (a stop to) non-Islamic practices, wherever they found prominence (of kufr). Accordingly, even as they cleared up Mathura, Brindaban, etc. from the rubbish of non-Islamic practices, the Babari mosque was built up in 923(?) A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Musa Ashiqan in the Janmasthan temple (*butkhane Janmasthan mein*) in Faizabad-Avadh, which was a great place of (worship) and capital of Rama's father' (p.9). 'Among the Hindus it was known as Sita ki Rasoi' (p.10). The passage has certain gaps, thanks to the wretched condition of the manuscript, which I have tried to fill within brackets.

Dr. Kakorawi has appended to the book an excerpt from the *Fasanah-i Ibrat* by the great early Urdu novelist, Mirza

Rajab Ali Beg Surur (1787-1867), which constitutes our fourth document. It says that 'a great mosque was built on the spot where Sita ki Rasoi is situated. During the regime of Babar, the Hindus had no guts to be a match for the Muslims. The mosque was built in 923 (?) A.H. under the patronage of Sayyid Mir Ashiqan....Aurangzeb built a mosque on the Hanuman Garhi .... The Bairagis effaced the mosque and erected a temple in its place. Then idols began to be worshipped openly in the Babari mosque where the Sita ki Rasoi is situated.' (pp.71-72). The author adds, that 'formerly, it is Shaikh Ali Hazin's observation which held good' and quotes the following Persian couplet of the Shaikh.

Bi-bīn karāmat-i butkhānah-ī marā aiy Shaikh!
Ki chūṅ kharāb shawad khānah-ī Khudā garded

Which means: O Shaikh! just witness the miracle of my house of idols, which, when desecrated, or demolished, becomes the house of God (a mosque). So, purporting to mean that formerly temples were demolished for construction of mosques, the author Surur, laments that 'the times have so changed that now the mosque was demolished for construction of a temple (on the Hanuman Garhi).' (p.72)

Clinching the issue

The foregoing four-fold documentary evidence leads us to certain incontrovertible conclusions, which can be stated as under:

1. That, in their zeal to hit Hinduism and spread Islam, the Muslim rulers had the knack of desecrating or demolishing Hindu temples and erecting mosques etc. in their place - bigger mosques in place of bigger temples and smaller mosques in place of smaller temples.
2. That there did exist a temple called the temple of Janmasthan at Ayodhya, where Rāma is believed to have incarnated, and that adjacent to it was what is called Sita ki Rasoi, which might originally have been part of it.
3. That, like Muslim rulers who desecrated Mathura, Vrindavana, etc., Babar chose Ayodhya for spread of

Islam and replacement of temples by mosques, thanks to its supreme importance as a holy place of the Hindus, and in 1528, under the patronage of Sayyid Mir Musa Ashiqan, got the so-called Babari mosque erected in displacement of the Rāma Janmasthān temple, certain relics of which appear to have persisted at least till 1855.

4. That the Babari mosque was also called 'masjid-i Janmasthan' and 'masjid-i Sita ki Rasoi' from long before 1855.
5. That the Hindus had long been carrying on worship at the Rāma Janmasthan even after the replacement of the Janmasthan temple by the Babari mosque.
6. That the foregoing facts are yielded by authentic Muslim records and have not been fabricated by the much-maligned British to 'divide and rule'.

These conclusions are irresistible and should clinch the issue of demolition versus non-existence of the Ramajanmasthan temple.

Dr. Harsh Narain

■

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, March 8, 1990

Sir: Dr Harsh Narain has in his article 'Ram Janmabhoomi Temple: Muslim testimony' (IE. Feb. 26) quoted from writings by Muslims to prove that the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya was demolished to construct Babari Masjid on its site.

Let us examine Dr. Narain's evidence.

The first evidence is the description of Babari Masjid as Masjid-e Janmasthan in a petition dated 30 November, 1858. There is nothing strange about it. In New Delhi, we have a masjid called Masjid Man Singh Road. Obviously, Man Singh Road came into existence much after the mosque was constructed. In any case on this basis it cannot be claimed to be temple built by Raja Man Singh! The fact is that all over the world, mosques are associated with the name of the locality or of the builder. Babari Masjid has been called by various other names as well e.g. Jama Masjid Ayodhya or Masjid Sita-ki-Rasoi or Masjid Mir Baqui. The petition refers to an act of desecration of the masjid by the Bairagis who, during the period of transition, made several attempts to occupy the masjid but were restrained by the civil authorities. All that the extract proves is that the locality was recognised as Janamsthan. This identification was a consequence of the popularisation of the cult of Rama in the post-Tulsidas era and its patronage by the Muslim rulers particularly the Nawabs of Oudh.

The second evidence also relates to the same period. But what is interesting is the phrase 'temple is extant by its side', which is this temple? Obviously it is the Ram Janmasthan Mandir which still stands by the side of Babari Masjid. In this extract, Babari Masjid is referred to as Masjid Sita-ki-Rasoi because by then Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Oudh, in a move to counteract the British efforts to destabilise his regime by inciting religious sentiments of the Hindus of Oudh, had conceded the land lying between Babari Masjid and Janmasthan Mandir in the name of 'Sita-ki-Rasoi'. So in fact this evidence only proves that even after Babari Masjid was constructed, Ram Janmasthan Mandir lay extant on its side.

The third evidence lays stress on the phrase 'Butkhana-e-Janmasthan mein'. The word 'mein' (in) is suggestive and Dr Narain's translation itself lets out the truth : A mosque cannot be built 'in the Janmasthan temple'. It can be built 'on' but not 'in' a temple. Hence, the translation of Butkhana itself is wrong. The word refers to the town of 'Ayodhya' and not just to the site where Babari Masjid stands.

The fourth evidence is a description in a novel. A novelist is not a historian and one does not expect historical exactitude from him or use a description in a novel as historic evidence.

All four 'Muslim' testimonies therefore, fail to support Dr Narain's case, particularly when the questions raised in the beginning of the article remain unanswered.

The conclusions drawn by Dr Narain are not only untenable but reflect his bias and prejudice against Islam and against Muslim rulers. If indeed the Muslim rulers demolished Mandir and built Masjids in their places as a matter of policy, out of religious zeal, not one Hindu temple would have survived into the British era. None of the evidence cited by him supports his basic assumption of the existence of a temple at the site of Babari Masjid or his charge against Babar of havig 'chosen Ayodhya' for the display of his Islamic zeal. In fact, there is no evidence to support that he ever reached Ayodhya !

The heart of the matter is the exact birth-site of Lord Rama and if that cannot be identified, we should regard the whole of India as the Ram Janmabhoomi and the whole of Ayodhya as the Ram Janmasthan. The Babari Masjid dispute– which is essentially political and not religious – can be amicably resolved by letting the Babari Masjid stand where it is and building a magnificent temple to the glory of Lord Rama in Ayodhya on an adjacent site.

14 Janpath
New Delhi 110001
March 2

Syed Shahabuddin

■

Sir: Far from contesting the contention of the JNU historians, all the evidence that Dr Harsh Narain has produced (IE, Feb.26) actually reinforces it. It is the historians' argument that prior to the nineteenth century there is no recorded evidence of any kind, in any language, and under the authorship of a person of any religious denomination that has so far been unearthed in support of the claim that the construction of Babari Moque had taken place at the site of any temple commemorating Rama's birth. All the texts that Dr Narain has cited belong to the nineteenth century. He might feel that he has clinched the issue'. But has he?

Centre for Historical Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University,New Delhi
March 2

K.S. Chaudhry

Indian Express, March 13, 1990

Sir: Dr Harsh Narain's attempt to discuss historicity of the allegation that Babar demolished the Rama birth-place temple to build the mosque is commendable as it makes the topic debatable (IE,Feb.26). He has first rightly conceded that the Babari mosque cannot be shown to have displaced a temple. He then, refers to three documents to infer that the mosque displaced the Janmasthan temple.

All the three documents refer to the period of 1850s. These were the days when the Britishers with their aim to annex Awadh, after their successful occupation of Bengal and Bihar, planted false stories and succeeded in misleading the masses to believe that Babari Masjid stood in the premises of the Ram temple which was demolished by Babar. To avoid Hindu-Muslim conflict and clash, the Hindus were allowed to sing bhajans and kirtans on a raised platform in the open yard within the outer enclosure of the Masjid to the left of the entrance gate. This platform now known as Ram Chabutra was claimed to be the Janmasthan and was called Ram Janmasthan and the same is still there. In all representations and litigations to construct a temple on this chabutra, it was claimed and described as Janmasthan. The machinations of the Britishers provoked Hindu-Muslim attacks in 1853 and 1855. In 1856 the Britishers annexed Awadh and the next year they captured Delhi and after this the clamour died down as the Britishers had achieved their aim and had lost interest in the Janmasthan issue. In those days the chabutra came to be described as the Janmasthan.

The first source cited by Dr Narain refers to this chabutra, and not to the masjid as the birth-place. The masjid was also called Janmasthan masjid as it was very close to the Janmasthan (i.e. chabutra). It was also referred to as Sita Rasoi ki Masjid because it was in near vicinity of 'Sita ki Rasoi'. It was no one's case that it means that masjid stands on the site of the Rasoi. The words quoted, 'Maqam Janmasthan ka sad-ha baras se parishan para tha (the place of Janmasthan had been lying unkempt / in disorder for hundreds of years) and the words 'Ahl-i-Hunud puja karte the' (the Hindus performed worship there) refer to the Ram Chabutra which was then called Janmasthan. In the suit filed on January 19, 1885, Mahant Raghubar Das claimed the chabutra as Janmasthan and sought permission to construct a temple on it. The Khatib of the Masjid in 1858 moved an application seeking the demolition of the chabutra. This is the first document referred to in which the chabutra, as was known, had been called the Janmasthan.

The passage of the third document referred to by Dr Narain is admittedly a slightly different version of that of the second document i.e. Hadiqah-i-Shuhada included as chap. IX in 'Wajid Ali Shah aur Unka Ahd' by Rais Ahmed Jafari. In this passage, the sentence, 'Aur pahlo main woh deir baqi hai' (And that temple is extant by its side) refers to the Janmasthan temple and not to Sita Ki Rasoi because the Rasoi has nowhere been referred to as 'temple' and the passage clearly refers to the Janmasthan temple still existing in the near vicinity of the Masjid.

All the three documents refer to the Janmasthan which was in existence in the 1850s and the logical inference is that the Masjid was not built on the Janmasthan. Hence the inference drawn by Dr Narain is wrong. Not far away from the Masjid, a grand old temple known as Ram Janmasthan Temple, is extant in Ayodhya. The centenarian priest of the temple Mahant Janaki Jiwan Das vehemently asserts that his temple had been the real Janmasthan temple. A. Cunningham in his Archaeological Survey of India (1862-63) records its existence as the Janmasthan temple. No one has challenged the claim by the priest and the description in the records as the Janamasthan temple.

The protagonists of the Ram Janmabhoomi have been asked to produce any historical evidence, not only independent of the British sources but also of the period prior to the advent of 19th century. (After 1819, the Britishers embarked upon their rumour planting campaign to annex Awadh). They can cite any writing, document, travelogue, memoir, lyrics, devotional songs, or inscription. We cannot believe that the Hindu community was too barren to produce a single soul during the long period between 1528 and 1819 who could record or narrate or was too benumbed to lament on destruction of the temple. It is during the period that the Hindu community produced Sant Tulsidas and enriched the world literature by Ramcharitmanas.

The story of alleged destruction of the temple by Babar was concocted by the Britishers and this mischievously false story is now being propagated for some ulterior motives.

Secretary *Mohd. Abdul Rahim Quraishi*
All India Muslim Personal Law Board
5-7-8/33 Nampally
Hyderabad - 500 001
February 28

■

Sir : This refers to the article by Dr Harsh Narain titled 'Muslim testimony' (IE, Feb.26).

The depth of the author's research is commendable, but the utility of it is doubtful. In his enthusiasm to demolish the case of Syed Shahabuddin and other Muslim scholars and writers, a simple fact seems to have eluded the well-informed author : the Ram Janmabhumi/Babari Masjid issue has travelled from the realm of rational thought and reasoned arguments to the dangerous realm of feelings and fervour. Hence the 'case law' of the kind the author has so painstakingly dug out, far from serving any constructive purpose only adds fuel to the unholy fire.

The real issue is not whether there wasor was not a temple called Janmasthan Mandir, or whether the site on which the controversial Babari Masjid stands belongs to Hindus or Muslims, but whether we Hindus, the majority community, should or should not try to make the minority communities feel less insecure, thereby obviating the need for any community to destroy or demolish the religious buildings of any other community.

Majoj Wad

13, Tughlak Road
New Delhi - 110 001
February 28

■

Indian Express, March 17, 1990

Sir : The "four-fold documentary evidence" produced by Dr Harsh Narain in support of Ramjanmabhoomi Temple in his article titled "Muslim testimony" (IE,. Feb. 26) is as weak as the evidence advanced to the contrary by the JNU historians which I have contested in my article "In the name of history" (IE, Feb. 25). Apart from the fact that not every written or printed word is an evidence of its authenticity, the four works cited by Dr Harsh Narain in support of his thesis were written and published in 1855-56, 1869, 1986 and 1987, the earliest 327-28 years after the construction of the controversial mosque. Yet Dr Harsh Narain treats the above works as "primary sources of medieval Indian history" which leaves no scope for discussion on his "incontrovertible conclusions". However, in recognition of his researches it may be pointed out that two of my research scholars (Dr Yogrj Malhotra and Dr Tej Ram) and I have worked out the biographies from the contemporary and near contemporary sources of all the persons in Babur's service. No person by the name of Musa Ashiqan or Sayyid Mir Ashiqan under whose "patronage" the mosque in question was supposed to have been built is traceable in Babur's times. Therefore, it is time we gave up the battle of evidence, before it passes into the hands of amateurs, and look for a solution to the problem in a sphere outside the domain of history. History in the hands of amateurs can be as dangerous as in the service of the nation by the courtesy of professionals.

A.R. Khan

Professor of History
H.P. University,
Shimla
February 28

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, March 22, 1990

Sir, This refers to Syed Shahabuddin's letter (IE. for March 8) in response to my article, 'Rama Janmabhoomi Temple : Muslim Testimony' (Feb.26).

I have sought to establish that the existence and desecration/demolition of the Ramajanmasthan temple is not a myth fabricated by the British but a fact testified to by certain Muslim writers. Syed Shahabuddin keeps mum on it, thereby reinforcing my finding.

He does not call in question the authenticity of the Muslim sources cited by me, and yet, unfairly enough, charges me with prejudice, when I only repeat what they say. In fact, I say nothing : it is these Muslim authors who say everything. Instead of fighting with me, therefore, he would do well to fight with them.

My first documentary evidence serves to yield the following facts:

(1) that the Babari mosque is the Janmasthan mosque, (2) that its courtyard is the Janmasthan, (3) that the Janmasthan had been lying unkept or in disorder for hundreds of years, and (4) that the Hindus had been carrying on their worship there from long before the year 1858. The upshot of all these facts taken *together* is that the tradition of the Ramajanmasthan temple displaced by the Babari mosque is an age-old one, much older than the British records thereof. Instead of taking these facts together, Syed Shahabuddin has singled out the name Janmasthan mosque. In so doing, however, he has had to acknowledge that the locality of the mosque came to be received as the Ramajanmasthan thanks to the work of Tulasidas and patronage of the Muslim rulers, and, let me add on his behalf, not to the craftiness of the British. Does it stand to reason that the locality became popular as Janmasthan *after* it or much of it had been occupied by the Babari mosque? And what inspired the Muslim rulers to contribute to the popularity of the name Janmasthan? Such

questions are far from answerable on Syed Shahabuddin's thesis.

It must be recognized, therefore, that the Janmasthan had been known to be the Janmasthan from time immemorial; that it was accepted as such by the Muslim rulers (on Syed Shahabuddin's showing); that it was taken for granted as such by the Khatib and Mu'azzin of the Babari mosque in his petition dated November 30, 1858, against the 'Bairagiyan-i Janmasthan'; that it was acknowledged as such by certain Muslim authors and crescentaders; and that the British have had absolutely no hand in the matter.

According to Syed Shahabuddin, the Ramajanmasthan temple still stands by the side of the Babari mosque. Are then the parties to the controversy engaged in shadow-boxing? He had better show the temple to all concerned and close the issue, or rather the non-issue.

Syed Shahabuddin contends that the expression 'butkhana-e Janmasthan ('butkhane Janmasthan', in the book) refers to the town Ayodhya and not to the site of the Babari mosque. This is unsustainable. Ayodhya ('Avadh') is referred to separately in the same sentence in which the above expression occurs. The preposition 'mein' need not be stretched out of the context. The expression 'butkhana-e Janmasthan mein' must, therefore, be construed to mean 'on the site of the Janmasthan temple'.

As regards Syed Shahabuddin's comments on my last evidence, it appears that he has not seen the *Fasanah-i 'Ibrat*. He has been misled by the popular notion of *'fasanah'*. In fact, the book is an historical account of the last four rulers of Avadh, viz. Nasiruddin Haidar, Muhammad Ali Shah, Amjad Ali Shah, and Wajid Ali Shah. Besides, it is from the pen of a Muslim and not of a Britisher. If he, too, is telling a lie, Syed Shahabuddin should say so frankly. But in that case the responsibility of explaining the reinforcement of the Hindu case by such a Muslim author will surely devolve upon him.

The four documents cited by me speak for themselves.

They ought to be studied by all concerned a little more seriously than Syed Shahabuddin has done.

Had Syed Shahabuddin paused a little longer to ponder how the Hindus, who are known for raising even mini constructions for worship, indeed even such as are incapable of being entered save by a tiny tot, had been performing worship on a ground lying in disorder for hundreds of years, from long before 1858, without ever caring to raise a temple there, he would have veered round to the view that there must have been a temple, Ramajanmasthan temple, which came to be displaced by the Babari mosque, leaving the Hindus no alternative but to use the ground itself for purposes of worship. As shown in my second document,. desecration or demolition of temples by erecting mosques has all along been a rule with the Muslim rulers and they dealt with Ayodhya accordingly. It is significant that Syed Shahabuddin is mum on this basic point, too.

Another comment upon my article is from the pen of Mr. K.S.Chaudhri (*ibid.*). He wants evidence from some pre-nineteenth century source. As a historian, he must know that evidence cannot be made to order, nor can any the faintest data be ignored in reconstructing history. I have given data enough for consideration by those who are committed to truth.

42/59 R.R.Vajpeyi Marg *Dr. Harsh Narain*
Narhi, Lucknow
March 10

■

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, April 6, 1990

Sir: I refer to Dr Harsh Narain's letter (IE, March 22). I do not question the textual authenticity of Dr Narain's sources but I question his conclusions as to the 'facts' yielded by them. The only fact yielded by his first source is that at a certain period Babari Masjid was also called the Janmasthan

Masjid which may well be due to the fact that the Ram Janmasthan Mandir is situated next to it. It does not yield the conclusion that the courtyard which is part of the structure or the outer courtyard (within the compound wall) is the birthsite of Lord Rama. Neither does it yield the conclusion that the site 'lying in disorder for hundreds of years' is the site occupied by the Babari Masjid or its compound because since the Masjid's construction in 1528 or even since Ayodhya's occupation by the Afghans in 1192, the site has never been uninhabited or desolate. Nor does it lead to the conclusion that the Hindus had been carrying on their worship on the site of Masjid or within its compound from long before 1858.

No one has questioned that Ayodhya is and has been a sacred place for the Hindus and a place of worship at least since the cult of Rama become popular. The question at issue is not the sanctity of Ayodhya but the identity of the precise spot where Babari Masjid structure stands. For argument's sake, even if it is conceded that the courtyard is the birthsite, how does it justify the claim that the precise birthsite is the inner sanctum of the Masjid – the Mihrab and the Manhar ?

As for the Ram Janmasthan Mandir it seems that Dr Narain has never been to Ayodhya at all. I request him to visit Ayodhya immediately and inform himself of the existence of the centuries old Ram Janmasthan Mandir situated to the immediate north of Babari Masjid where the Vaishnavas have been worshipping for ages. It is the second oldest Ram Mandir in the country, the oldest being in Allahabad.

The locality became popularly known as Janmasthan after the cult of Rama became popular after contemporary Ayodhya came to be associated with Rama and after the Ram Janamsthan Mandir was constructed. The Babari Masjid which has been variously described in different periods then came also to be called Janmasthan Masjid. By then Hanuman Garhi had been built and Bairagis had settled in Ayodhya. This explains why Bairagis living in the vicinity of Babari Masjid and who made several efforts to desecrate or encroach upon the Masjid were described in the petition of November 30, 1858 as Bairagiyan-e-Janamsthan.

Ayodhya is not Awadh. Ayodhya is a place; Awadh is a region or a territory. In the same way Butkhana-e-Janamsthan is not the site of Babari Masjid. Dr Narain cannot be permitted to disregard the clear difference between mein (in) and 'par' (on).

Fasana-e-Ibrat by any stretch of imagination cannot be called a work of history.

One fails to understand how the 'fact' that the Hindus had been performing worship on a ground in the vicinity of Babari Masjid or say even within its compound wall leads to the conclusion that a temple existed on the site of the Babari Masjid and was demolished for the construction of the Masjid. Logically, the construction and the existence of the temple must be proved by contemporary evidence (4th century AD to 16th century AD), before its demolition is asserted when there is no contemporary record of its demolition.

The question whether Muslim rulers as a rule desecrated or demolished temples and erected mosques thereon is a perennial question which has been answered many times and only reveals the sick mentality of those who make such sweeping allegations.

14 Janpath *Syed Shahabuddin*
New Delhi
March 28

■

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, April 21, 1990

Sir: In criticism of my article : Ram Janmabhoomi Temple 'Muslim testimony' (IE, Feb. 26). Mohd.Abdul Rahim Quraishi (IE, March 13) seems to suspect my mid-nineteenth century witnesses like the active crescentader Mirza Jan and others of beguilement by the Britishers who planted the false story of demolition of the Ram Janmabhomi temple by Babar.

Grounds ? None. He forgets that they claim to derive their information from old records (*Kutub-i-sabiqah*). In fact, as Mr Abhas Kumar Chatterjee has shown (IE, March 26), the story was current even about the mid-eighteenth century.

Mr. Quraishi believes that originally the Hindus claimed only the Chabutara to be the Janmabhoomi. Which is not the case. According to my second document the Janmabhoomi temple was a big one. The Chabutara is too small a site for it. It is a different matter that, being dispossessed of the temple, they tried to keep at least the Chabutara in their possession.

Like Syed Shahabuddin (IE. March 8), Mr Quraishi makes too much of the existing structure called 'Janmasthan Sita Rasoi'. It has so far been nobody's case that it is the real Janmabhoomi temple. Mr. Quraishi cites 'the centenarian priest of this temple Mahant Janki Jivan Das', who, according to him, 'asserts vehemently that this temple had been the real Janmasthan temple'. He appears to be misinformed. There is no such Mahant there. The marble plate at the gate of the 'Janmasthan Sita Rasoi' (mark the name of the building in question appearing at its gate) bears the name of Mahant Harihar Das. On personal enquiry, I was told that this Mahant Harihar Das has been in charge of the building for over half a century. (He is at present ailing under partial paralysis.) And I found not a single person connected with it who claims it to be the real Rama Janmabhoomi temple.

The fact of the matter is something like this. The vast mound called Ramakot (Rama's stronghold) divided by a road on one side of which stands the so-called Babari mosque and on the other the 'Janmasthan Sita Rasoi' appears to have originally been a big complex of buildings called the Rama Janmabhoomi temple. The 'Janmasthan Sita Rasoi' formed part of it and escaped destruction. Its very name, inscribed at the gate, indicates it. It is called Pakasthan (kitchen) in the *Ayodhyamahatmya* of the *Skanda-Purāṇa*.

It is true that no old enough Hindu record of the Rama temple demolition has come to light so far. But this is no

ground for rejection of the temple demolition story. There is no old Hindu record of the invasion of Alexander the Great. Does it mean that his invasion did not take place? To tell the truth, the Hindus of old were bad at history, worse at geography, and worst at cartography.

Prof. A.R.Khan is inclined (IE, March 17) to reject my documentary evidence out of hand on the ground that he and his students could not find any person by the name of Sayyid Musa Ashiqan in Babar's times in sources contemporaneous with Babar. He appears to be too much of a historian to see the unreason behind his rejection of all other evidence simply on the basis of his negative evidence. He forgets that a historian is not only a judge but a detective too. A judge's duty ends with the finding that a certain evidence is insufficient, whereas a historian's duty begins with a newly-found evidence though insufficient. Therefore, the documents cited by me deserve careful study by responsible historians.

42/59, R.R. Vajpeyi Marg *Dr. Harsh Narain*
Narhi, Lucknow-1
April 4

■

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, April 25, 1990

Sir: In his letter (April 6) Syed Shahabuddin continues to make much of what he calls Janmasthan Mandir separated from the so-called Babari mosque by just a road.

I do not deny the existence of the structure. I demur to the name and its misleading implications. Its name, as it appears on the marble 2 plate of its gate, is 'Janmasthan Sita Rasoi', or, to follow the *Ayodhyamahatmya*, 'Pakasthan'. The adjectival expression 'Janmasthan' suggests that it formed part of the Rama Janmasthan/Janmahbhoomi temple displaced by the Babari mosque. In fact, the entire mound called Ramkot is divided by a road, on one side of which stands the Babari mosque and on the other the Janmasthan Sita Rasoi. It appears to have originally been covered with a big block called Rama

Janmabhoomi temple. The Janmasthan Sita Rasoi formed part of it and yet escaped destruction, without ever usurping the right of the destroyed part to be the birth-place of Rama. Not being the Janmasthan/Janmabhoomi proper, it has never figured in the dispute between the Babari mosque and the Janmabhoomi temple. It is, therefore, not the Janmasthan Sita Rasoi but the Janmabhoomi temple from which the Babri mosque derives its second name 'Masjid-i Janmasthan'. Indeed, as it is, the Janmasthan Sita Rasoi presupposes the existence of the Janmabhoomi temple.

The position stated above serves also to explain the phrase 'butkhana-i Janmasthan mein' (in the Janmasthan temple). The Babari mosque covers not the whole but only a part of the erstwhile Janmabhoomi temple, hence the use of the preposition 'mein' (in) is quite justified.

Syed Shahabuddin raises another unnecessary issue: 'Ayodhya is not Avadh. Ayodhya is a place: Avadh is a region or a territory.' This is simply untrue. 'Avadh' is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word 'Ayodhya'. During medieval times, 'Avadh' was used as the name of a town as well as of a *subah* (province) or territory.

Syed Shahabuddin says, '*Fasanah-i 'Ibrat* by any stretch of imagination cannot be called a work of history.' He need not stretch his imagination: he need only to turn to the book to find that it is not a novel (as he maintained in his earlier letter) but a historical account of four rulers of Avadh.

He complains of the 'sick mentality of those who make such sweeping allegations' as that 'Muslim rulers as a rule desecrated or demolished temples and erected mosques thereon'. He forgets that in the instant case this sweeping allegation has been made by Mirza Jan, Shaikh Muhammad Azamat Ali Kakorawi Nami and Mirza Rajab Ali Beg Surur, and not by me. He had failed to look them in the face squarely and make out a single point in rebuttal of the revelations contained in their writings ont he existence and demolition of the Rama Janmabhoomi temple.

42/59, R.R. Vajpeyi Marg
Narhi, Lucknow - 1
April 10

Dr. Harsh Narain

■

Muslim testimony

Indian Express, May 2, 1990

Sir: Please refer to Dr Harsh Narain's rejoinder (IE, April 25). I fail to grasp his logic.

Now that Dr Narain has attested to the existence of the structure in Ayodhya which I call Ram Janamsthan Mandir, will he please enlighten the readers on the function of the structure. The question is not what is written on the marble plate. Such plates were installed in various parts of Ayodhya at the turn of the century and have no historic or archaeological value. The question is whether the structure is or is not a Mandir dedicated to Lord Rama, whether it is or is not so regarded by its Mahant and the Vaishnavas all over the country and whether they claim it to mark the birth-site of Lord Rama or not.

I do not see the logic of Dr Narain's assertion that Janamsthan Sita Rasoi presupposes the existence of Janambhoomi Mandir and that the structure in the remaining part of the Ram Janambhoomi Mandir which was *partially* (thank you, Dr Narain) demolished to make place for Babari Masjid. Why should Babar the iconoclast, have limited his fanatical zeal to the destruction of a part and not the whole? And of course the larger question remains unanswered: how the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir, if it existed, escaped the fanatical zeal of the Afghans and the Turks from the 11th century onward? Perhaps, they wanted a future ruler to take the credit or the blame!

Babari Masjid, as I have explained earlier, derived its second name after the locality came to be called Janmasthan, i.e. after the cult of Rama became popular and the

Janamasthan Mandir constructed in that locality became an eminent place of worship. Babari Masjid antedates the Mandir, not vice versa.

Will Dr Narain inform us when Ayodhya and Avadh began to be differentiated in administrative terms?

Will Dr Narain obtain the cretificate of any eminent historian regarding the historical value of Fasana-e-Ibrat, which, incidentally, I have not only read but of which I possess a copy?

I shall not respond to Dr Narain's general charge which the very existence of thousands of temples in territories under Muslim rulers for thousand years serves to rebut. He seems to accept every literary hyperbole and chauvinistic assertion as historic truth, if it serves his purpose.

Syed Shahabuddin

14, Janpath
New Delhi-1
April 25

Janmabhoomi debate

Indian Express, May 10, 1990

Sir: Syed Shahabuddin appears to believe (IE, May 2) that the Janmasthan Sita Rasoi is regarded as the real Rama Janmasthan temple. He is requested to name a single responsible person who can testify to the existence of such a tradition. Discussion on this issue can proceed further and bear fruit only when this is done.

He quereis how the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir, if it existed, escaped the fanatical zeal of the Afghans and the Turks from the 11th century onward? Why does he not query or examine my witnesses, whom I have only cited? It is strange that despite repeated caution from my side, he persits in representing their statements as mine independently made. Same is the case with the 'general charge' ascribed to me by him. I have made no general charge. It is my witnesses who give to the Muslim rulers in general the 'credit' of replacing Hindu temples by mosques. If they are telling a lie, he should say so plainly. Or are they, too, out to divide and rule like the Britishers?

As regards the *Fasanah-i 'Ibrat*, he is side-tracking the issue. First, he dismissed it as a mere novel. When told that it is an account of the reign of the last four rulers of Awadh, he contends that it is no history. Why does he shy away from facing the facts stated therein? Or is its author, too, a liar trying to set the Hindus against the Muslims, to 'divide and rule'? In fact, Syed Shahabuddin seems to be far from conscious of the implications of his averments.

Syed Shahabuddin contends that Ayodhya is not Ạvadh. He is advised to consult at least Abul Fazl (*A 'in-i Akbari*, 1989 II, p.334), to be informed that 'Ayodhya (is) commonly called Awadh.' Besides, if he looks into the *Babarnama* carefully, he will find that Awadh is referred to therein as the name of a town (Ayodhya) as well as of a *suba* or *sarkar*. In fact, as pointed out in my earlier letter (IE, April 25), Avadh/Awadh is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word 'Ayodhya'.

42/59, R.R. Vajpeyi Marg *Dr. Harsh Narain*
Narhi, Lucknow - 1
May 3

Appendix VIII

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE BĀBARĪ MOSQUE

I

1. Muslim divines and leaders have all along been offering to part with the Bābarī mosque in case it is established that it has displaced a temple. Do you endorse the offer?
2. If not, why?
3. Do you uphold the formula, 'Once a mosque, always a mosque'?
4. But the Qur'ān and the Prophet do not sanction or envisage it. The Qur'ān speaks of two kinds of mosques – a mosque founded on piety (*assasa bunyāna-hū 'alā taqwā*) on the one hand and a mosque founded on the brink of a crumbling, over-hanging precipice (*assasa bunyānu-hū 'alā shafā jurufin hārin*) on the other,[1] the latter chosen with a view to evil-doing and disloyalty (*attakhadhū masjidan ḍirāraṁ wa kufran*)[2] and bound to topple into the hell-fire along with its builders (*fa anhāra bi-hī fī nār-i jahannama*).[3] This second kind has come to be designated as the mosque of evil (*masjidu 'ḍ-ḍirār*). The Qur'ān prohibits prayer in this kind of mosque: Never stand (to pray) therein (*Lā taqum fī-hi abadan*).[4] As a matter of fact, these Qur'ānic commands were occasioned by a real mosque of evil built by some Muslims on the outskirts of Medina. They invited the Prophet to inaugurate it by offering prayer, but the Prophet, though agreeable in

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[1] Q., Sūrah at-Tawbah (9) 109

[2] *Ibid*. 107

[3] *Ibid*. 109

[4] *Loc. cit.*

the first instance, set fire to it and smashed it to pieces.[1] Does it not cut the ground from under the feet of the 'once a mosque, always a mosque' thesis ?

5. If not, how?

II

6. Was the India under the Lodī-s with Ayodhya under the Sharqī-s a *Dāru 'l-Islām* or a *Dāru 'l-Ḥarh*?
7. If a *Dāru 'l-Islām*, were its Hindu inhabitants not *Dhimmī-s*?
8. If they were, is the mosque built by Bābar in replacement of the temple a mosque built on piety or a mosque of evil?
9. If the latter, does it deserve any better treatment than the mosque of evil referred to in the Qur'ān?
10. If so, how?
11. Khalīfah 'Umar bin 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz restored to the Christians a church of Damascus turned by Banī Naṣr into a mosque.[2] The same caliph ordered restoration to the Christians the Church of John there turned into a mosque, though the Muslims made the Christians withdraw their claim by restoring to the latter all the churches wrested by the former in the area of Al-Ghūṭ by force.[3] Caliph Hārūnu 'r-Rahīd also permitted to the Christians reconstruction of several churches demolished by 'Alī bin Sulaymān, the Abbasid governor of Egypt, during the caliphate of Mahdī.[4] Such restorations occurred during the reigns of Akbar and Shāhjahān. For instance, Akbar ordered restoration of a mosque at Asir fort to the Hindus.[5] Shāhjahān, too, ordered restoration to the Hindus the Cintāmaṇi Pārśvanātha temple built at Saraspur near Ahmedabad by Shāntidās Jauharī which Aurangzib had converted into the Quwwatu 'l-Islam mosque by

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[1] Ibn Hishām, *Sīratu 'n-Nabiyy-i Kāmil*, Vol. II, p.635

[2] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥu 'l-Buldān*, p.189

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191

[4] Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, Vol. IV, p.424

[5] *Tārīkh-i Firishtah*, Vol.II, p.839. But Prince Dāniyāl flouted his orders.

slaughtering a cow therein.[1] It is a different matter that on taking the reigns of government into his own hands, 'Ālamgīr Aurangzīb ordered restoration to all such mosques the status quo ante as mosques by rescinding his father's orders. Well, did they all violate the *Sharī'ah*?

12. If not, why should Indian Muslims not follow suit?

III

13. According to the *Ḥadīqah-i Shuhadā* (1856), *Muraqqah-ī Khusrawī* (written 1869), *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* (1703 circa), *Gumgashtah Ḥālāt-i Ajodhya Ya'nī Tārīkh-i Pārīnah-ī Madīnatu 'l-Awliyā* (middle of the last century), etc., the Bābarī mosque was built by Bābar by demolishing the Rāma temple. (The *Ṣaḥīfah* names none.) Are their authors all liars?
14. If so, how?
15. Was the tradition ever called in question before the last decade?
16. If never, why today?
17. Is there any instance of a non-existent temple's being reported by Muslims as forcibly converted into a mosque and that, too, when such a report was likely to prejudice the case of the mosque party pending before the powers that be and even the British Resident had a say in decision-making?
18. If not, why take it for granted in the instant case that the Rāma temple did not exist despite unequivocal acknowledgement of its existence and demolition by Bābar?
19. If it cannot be so taken for granted, why not put a stop to the imbroglio by restoring the Rāma Janmabhūmi to the Hindus?

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[1] *Akhbārāt*, 9th year, sheets 49 ff.; Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan alias 'Alī Muḥammad Khān Bahādur, *Mir 'at-i Aḥmadī*, Vol.I, pp.259-260; M.S.Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat*, pp.55 ff

बाबरी मस्जिद प्रश्नमाला

(मुस्लिम नेताओं के लिए)

मन्दिर-मस्जिद विवाद पारस्परिक सौहार्दपूर्ण संवाद से ही हल हो सकता है। यही सब कहते हैं किन्तु संवाद का आधार क्या हो ? निराधार संवाद निरर्थक है। गृहमन्त्रालय की ओर से जनवरी 1991 में आयोजित संवाद की विफलता हम देख चुके हैं। मैं मुस्लिम नेतृत्व के विचारार्थ नीचे एक प्रश्नमाला प्रस्तुत करता हूं, जो संभावित संवाद का आधार बन सकती है।

I

1. मुस्लिम नेता और उलमा कहते आये हैं कि यदि सिद्ध कर दिया जाय कि बाबरी मस्जिद मन्दिर तोड़कर बनायी गयी है, तो उसे मुसलमान स्वयं तोड़कर भूमि हिन्दुओं को वापस कर देंगे। (वस्तुतः गत वर्ष गृह मन्त्रालयद्वारा इसी आधार पर दिल्ली में उभयपक्षीय विशेषज्ञों के बीच वार्ता आयोजित की गयी थी।) क्या आप इसके लिये तैयार हैं ?

2. यदि नहीं, तो क्यों ?

3. क्या आप 'एक बार मस्जिद तो सर्वदा मस्जिद' में विश्वास करते हैं ?

4. किन्तु अल्लाह और रसूल तो इसे मान्यता नहीं देते। अल्लाह (कुर्रान, अत्तौबः 107-110) के आदेश पर रसूल ने मस्जिदे ज़िरार को तुड़वा और जलवा दिया था (इब्न हिशाम, सीरतुऽन्-नबी-ए कामिल, जिल्द 2, पृ० 635-636)। बल्कि अल्लाह ने रसूल पर यहाँ तक प्रकट कर दिया था कि उक्त मस्जिद अपने निर्माणकर्ता को जहन्नम की आग में ले गिरेगी। तो क्या इस प्रकार 'एक बार मस्जिद तो सर्वदा मस्जिद' का दावा खण्डित नहीं हो जाता ?

5. यदि नहीं, तो कैसे ?

II

6. क्या इस्लाम की दृष्टि से लोदियों का भारत और शार्क़ियों का अवध दारुऽल्-इस्लाम था अथवा दारुऽल्-हर्ब ?

7. यदि दारुऽल्-इस्लाम, तो क्या उस के हिन्दू निवासी हनफ़ी विधि-विधान के अनुसार ज़िम्मी नहीं हुए ?

8. यदि हुए, तो क्या यदि बाबर (अथवा किसी अन्य मुस्लिम) ने उनका पुराना मन्दिर तोड़कर मस्जिद बनायी हो, तो वह मस्जिद मस्जिद होगी ?

9. यदि नहीं, तो क्या ऐसी मस्जिद के स्थान पर मन्दिर-निर्माण शरीअः के अनुकूल नहीं होगा ?

10. ख़लीफः उ़मर बिन अब्दुऽल्-अ़ज़ीज़ ने दमिश्क में बनी नस्र द्वारा मस्जिद रूप में परिवर्तित गिरजाघर ईसाइयों को वापस कर दिया (अल्-बलाजुरी, फुतूहुऽल्-बुल्दान, कराची, 1962, पृ. 189) । इसी प्रकार उक्त ख़लीफ़ः ने दमिश्क में ही मस्जिद रूप में बलात् परिवर्तित यूइत्रा का गिरजाघर ईसाइयों को वापस करने का आदेश दिया । (अस्तु, मुसलमानों ने ईसाइयों को इस बात पर राजी कर लिया कि, यदि ईसाई उक्त मस्जिद छोड़ दें, तो अल्गूत् के इलाके में उन से बलात् अपहृत सभी गिरजाघर उन्हें वापस कर दिये जायेंगे ।) तत्रैव, पृ. 190-191) पुनः खलीफःहारुनऽर्रशीद ने भी मिश्र में खलीफ़ः महदी की ख़िलाफत में मिश्र के अब्बासी गवर्नर अ़ली बिन सुलैमान द्वारा ढाये गये अनेक गिरजाघरों के पुनर्निर्माण की अनुमति दे दी थी (मक़्रीज़ी, ख़ितत, जिल्द 4,पृ. 424) । ऐसी ही घटनाएं भारत में अकबर और शाहजहां के राजत्व-काल में घटित हो चुकी हैं । शाहजहां से सम्बद्ध घटना इस प्रकार है । गुजरात के गवर्नर के रूप में आलमगीर (जो बाद में औरंगजेब हुआ) ने अहमदाबाद के पास सरसपुर में स्थित चिन्तामणि पारसनाथ के जैन मन्दिर को मस्जिदे कुव्वतुऽल्-इस्लाम के रूप में परिवर्तित कर दिया और उसमें एक गाय काटने का आदेश दिया । किन्तु हिन्दुओं की शिकायत पर शाहजहां ने उसके मीनार गिरवारकर इमारत जैनों को वापस करा दी । (यह दूसरी बात है कि दिल्ली का शासन-सूत्र हाथ में आने पर औरंगजेब ने शाहजहां का आदेश रद्द कर के मस्जिद को बहाल कर दिया) । तो क्या उक्त शासकों ने शरीअः के विरुद्ध आचरण किये ?

11. यदि नहीं, तो भारत के मुसलमान उन का अनुसरण क्यों न करें ?

III

12. हदीक़ः ए शुहदा (1856), फ़सानः-ए इब्रत (1860), मुरक़्क़-ए खुस्रवी, (लिखित 1869) । सहीफ़ः-ए चिहलनसाएहे बहादुरशाही (1707) आदि के अनुसार बाबरी मस्जिद रामजन्मभूमि सीता रसोई मन्दिर तोड़कर बनायी गयी है क्या वे सबके सब गलत लिखते हैं ?

13. यदि हां, तो कैसे ?

14. क्या कोई उदाहरण है कि मन्दिर का अस्तित्व ही न हो और मुस्लिम लेखक सब लिखने लग जायं कि वह तोड़ दिया गया, विशेषतः जब इससे तत्कालीन शासनतन्त्र के समक्ष मस्जिदवादियों का पक्ष निर्बल पड़ने की सम्भावना प्रबल हो ?

15. यदि नहीं, तो वर्तमान प्रकरण में यह कैसे कहा जा सकता है कि मन्दिर था ही नहीं और उसे तोड़ कर मस्जिद बनाये जाने का प्रवाद स्वयं मुस्लिम लेखकों ने चला दिया ?

16. यदि नहीं कहा जा सकता, तो जन्मभूमि हिन्दुओं को वापस क्यों न कर दी जाय ?

3 अक्टूबर 1992

हर्षनारायण

SUMMARY OF REPLY TO THE VHP QUESTIONNAIRE (IN HINDI) ON AYODHYA DISPUTE

Question No. 1 and 2 : Although question No. 1 is quite vague and hypothetical and does not give the name of any Alim or Leader who is said to have given any such statement, yet the AIBMAC may make its stand clear. Our stand has all along been that the site of Babri Masjid is neither the place of birth of Lord Rama and nor there existed any Rama Janam Bhoomi Temple at its site when the said mosque was constructed. However mere allegation on even some proof of the remains of any temple at the site of any old mosque cannot lead to the inference that a mosque was constructed by demolishing the said temple and hence there is no question of surrendering or giving away the said mosque for conversion into a temple.

In the case of Babri-Masjid also no such eventuality can be comptemplated as there is absolutely no evidence historical, archeological, or legal to prove that is was constructed by demolishing any existing Ram Janam Bhoomi Temple on that it was claimed as Ram Janam Bhoomi in 19th century or prior thereto.

Question No. 3 : It is correct that once a mosque, always a mosque. It is true that once a place is treated as a mosque, it continues to remain a mosque for all times to come. This is a settled principle in Islamic Law.

Question No. 4 and 5 : The inferences in question No. 4 and 5 are drawn on a misreading and misconception of the Quran and its interpretation with reference to the 'Masjid'

Zirar which was not at all a mosque in the true sense of the word.

A. The translation of the complete verse which be speaks the nature of the masjid al-Zirar reads :

> "And (there are hypocrites) who have established a (separate) house of worship in order to create mischief, and to promote apostasy and an outpost for all who from the outset have been warring against God and His Apostle. And they will surely swear (to you, O believers)" we had but the best of intentions" - while the God (Himself) bears witness that they are lying."

There are several things mentioned in this verse that require attention ;

(i) The mischievous purpose *(diraran)* underlying the construction of the pseudo-mosque;

(ii) Disbelief/disbelieving nature *(kufran)* of the builders/constructors;

(iii) The intention of causing dissent among the believers *(tafriqan bayn al Muminin);*

(iv) Establishment of a centre for anti-state activities *(irsadan);*

(v) The apparent claim of the builders that their purpose was good and Allah's declaration that their claim was a lie. *Masjid al-dirar* was a Masjid only in form built with evil intention mentioned clearly in the Quranic verse. It is, therefore, irrational to regard it a masjid at all.

For further details and clarifications various exegetical works may be referred to. All these works unanimously maintain that this pseudo-mosque was built by a few hypocrites *(al-Manafiqun)* at the instigation of a Christian hermit named Abu Amir who was planning to go to Constantinople and seek help from the Byzantine emperor against the Muslims. How could such a centre of intrigue, conspiracy and mischief be termed a mosque. A mosque in actuality is a house of worship built with the sole purpose of worshipping God, the Creator, the Sustainer and the Master of the Universe, in order to seek His pleasure.

B. Ibn Hisham has abstained from using the word "Muslims" for those who had constructed the masjid al-dirar. If he had done so, he would have committed a blunder by forging an inconceivable category of infidel-believers.

Questions 6,7,8 and 9 : India under the Sultan of Delhi, including the Lodi Sultanate, or of the regional state of the Shariqis, may be generally characterised as Darul Islam simply because it was under Muslim rule. But the character of the state did not conform to the theory of the Islamic state because the Islamic laws were not fully adhered to. The Sultanate was not a theocracy but a state, though led by the Muslims. The non-Muslim population in the Delhi Sultanate enjoyed the status of Non-Zimmi. They were tolerated and protected ones and enjoyed religious freedom and protection.

Questions 6 to 8 confuse the three separate states, those of Lodis, the Sherqis and of Mughals under Babur as a common entity. In fact Babur had neither converted any temple at the alleged site of Ram Janumbhumi into a mosque nor destroyed or desecrated it but the Baburi Masjid was constructed at a site of an already existing Muslim settlement in Ayodhya.

Secondly, this mosque can never be compared with the Masjid-e-Zirar as it was built with the genuine intention of enabling the Muslims to pray at a site of Muslim settlement, not even remotely related to the alleged destroyed site of a temple. It may be stressed again that Masjid-e-Zirar forms an exception of a pseudo mosque and not a categorisation of a mosque based on evil doing.

Question No. 10 and 11 : The alleged instance of Umar bin Abdul Aziz of restoring to the Christians a Church "not included in the fifteen Churches mentioned in their covenant with the Muslims" and of Califh Harun al-Rashid renovating dilapidated churches and giving them to the Christians are to be considered and discussed on the merits of each case.

Similarly the cases of temples, allegedly converted into mosques, being restored back to Hindus by Akbar and Shah Jahan are to be considered on the basis of facts of each case and keeping in mind that these Rulers were not governed by any such legal system on constitution as we have in India today and which is equally applicable to the Muslims of India in accordance with which they are already contesting their case. Moreover, if Akbar could restore to the Hindus the temple in Asir fort and Shah Jahan could do likewise in the case of Chintamani temple near Ahmadabad, they would have surely restored the Baburi Masjid to the Hindus, had it been built by conversion of a temple and Tulsidas, the author of Ramcharitmanas would have certainly pleaded with Akbar to do so. Absence of such action on the part of Akbar and Tulsidas or later of Shah Jahan is conclusive proof that the Baburi Masjid was not built on a temple site by demolishing any so called Ram Janam Bhoomi temple.

Question No.12 : Hadiqai-Shuhida (1856), Muraqqai-Khusrawi (1869) Gumgeshta Halate Ajodhya, or so called Sahifai Chehil Nasahi Bahadur Shahi etc. are 19th century works. They cannot be relied upon in tendering evidence on a matter of Sixteenth century. They have no historical value but are based on a myth and legend developed in the mid-nineteenth century. They denote the emerging form of the communal spectre, pride and pleasure in distortions of history by desecration of religious places of worship and growth of polemical literature. They are far removed from history and are based on historical falacies and inconsistencies which negate historical and archaeological evidence of scholars. There are many similar folk tales with genial currency at the hands of irresponsible authors but which are neither history nor factual and actual chronology or narration of facts.

Question No. 13 : The author of the aforesaid works were never taken seriously by historians or sober and intelligent Hindus or Muslims. The Independent Historians have already dealt with these books in their report submitted to the Government of India on 13th May, 1991.

Question No. 14, 15 and 16 : Neither European nor Hindu or Muslim contemporary or near contemporary sources mention about Baburi Masjid having been built on the site of a temple. William Finch who visited Ayodhya during the course of his stay in India in 1608-11 makes no mention of it. In 1695-96 Sujan Rai Bhandari composed his Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh. He describes holy places but his account of Ayodhya has no reference to destruction of a temple there. In 1759-60 Rai Chaturman wrote his Chehar Gulshan Mohammad Shahi giving geographical account of India – but with reference to Ayodhya does not speak of the destruction of a temple there.

The legend grew from the account first made by the Jesint priest Joseph Tieffenthaler in the middle of the 18th century and inconsistant and polemical literature developed to vitiate relations between the two communities and its unfortunate aftermath with disastrous consequences over a non-issue.

In this respect also Independent Historians viz. Prof. R.S. Sharma etc. have given detailed reasons in their report submitted to the Government of India on 13.5.1991.

October 16, 1992 A.I.B.M.A.C.

◆

REJOINDER TO THE AIBMAC's REPLY TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1-2. The AIBMAC's reply to the first question seems to suggest that none has made the offer that, if the existence and demolition of a temple for construction of the Bābari mosque is established, the Muslims will hand over the site to the Hindus. It is tantamount to denying the obvious. It appears that at least two important members of the AIBMAC – Mr Jawed Habib and Sayyid Ahmad Bukhari, whose offer to the same effect was published only the other day – have not seen the Committee's reply to these two questions. Let them say whether or not they made the offer referred to in the opening question. (Let others alone for the moment). A more responsible reply was expected of the AIBMAC.

3-5. The AIBMAC insist that the mosque of evil was not a mosque but a pseudo-mosque. But the Qur'ān (9.107) does call it a 'mosque' and the Prophet, too, treated it as such originally. However, from their reply it transpires that a pseudo-mosque can be destroyed. Their formula, therefore, needs to be modified like this : 'Once a mosque always a mosque', but, if a mosque is shown to be a pseudo-mosque, it should be destroyed like the *'masjidu 'ḍ-ḍirār'*. Thus, if the Bābarī mosque is a pseudo-mosque, it would deserve destruction, on their own showing.

6-9. The AIBMAC say in reply that 'The non-Muslim population in the Delhi Sultanate' was non-Dhimmī. Did the Sultāns abolish the Jizyāh ? If not, how can Jizyāh-payers be non-Dhimmī-s ?

10-11. The AIBMAC do not demur to the precedents created by certain Caliphs in restoring to the Dhimmī-s their places of worship replaced forcibly by mosques wholly or partially. These precedents go to demolish the formula 'Once a mosque always a mosque'. The AIBMAC contend in reply that the precedents 'are to be considered and discussed on the merits of each case'. Let them do so, but with what results ?

As regards Akbar and Shāh Jahān, it is to be borne in mind that the 'Bābarī mosque' was a deserted mosque and in full use of the Hindus. That is why no author from 1530 to 1706 A.D. refers to it even remotely. On the other hand, it is remembered as 'Rāma Janma Bhūmi' by Sant Lāladāsa in his *Avadhavilāsa* composed in 1675 A.D.

In fact, even William Finch (1608-11) found neither the mosque nor Muslims but only Paṇḍā-s in the Ramkot which was in ruins then.

It is also to be borne in mind that the complaint about the destruction of the Cintāmaṇī Pārśvanātha temple was made to Shāh Jahān not by non-Muslims but by Mullā Abdul Ḥakīm who argued that 'this building by reason of its being the property of another person, could not be considered a mosque according to the inviolable Islamic law'. (M.S. Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat*, p.58). (Kindly read 'Musalmānoṅ' for 'Hinduoṅ' in the Hindi version of question 10.)

12-13. The *Ṣaḥīfah-i Chihal Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* is not a 19th but an 18th century work. The AIBMAC's reply that the Muslim documents of the 19th and 18th centuries are not reliable is simply arbitrary. The Qur'ān alone claims that the Kā'bah was built or rebuilt by Abraham. His journey to and sojourn in Arabia are not supported by the Bible. Are the AIBMAC prepared to discard the Qur'ānic statement as unreliable for the simple reason that Abraham preceded the revelation by some 3,700 years ?

The 19th century documents refer to past records and books of history, from which they derive the information about the replacement of the Rāma temple by the Bābarī mosque. There is no reason to disbelieve them.

When they made the said statement, the case of the Hanūmāngaḍhī was pending in the Royal Court and the British Resident, too, had a hand in the matter. The Muslims' claim was based on their contention that the place had all along been occupied by a mosque and not by a temple. If the Bairagis' claim that there was only a temple and no mosque had been established, the Muslims would have lost their case. On the same analogy the related case of the Bābarī mosque would have been lost by the Muslims on their own showing that it had replaced a temple. Even so, they took the risk of telling the truth in their writings. How can then they be called 'unreliable'?

14. Tieffenthaler was not the first but the second known author to speak of the demolition of the Rāma Janmabhūmi temple. He visited Ayodhya in the sixties of the 18th century. But the *Ṣaḥīfah-ī Chihal-Naṣā'iḥ-i Bahādurshāhī* in which the reference first occurs belongs to the first decade of the 18th century. The Janmabhūmi tradition is attested to by the *Avadhavilāsa* of 1675 A.D. and the *Ayodhyā-Mahātmya* of the 14th century A.D., a pre-Bābar part of the *Skanda-Purāṇa* referred to by Jīva Gosvāmin & Mitra Miśra.

15-16. These questions remain unanswered. Was the veracity of the statement by the Muslim authors ever called in question prior to the present controversy ? And is there any instance of a non-existent temple's being described as demolished by any conqueror or emperor ? These are straight questions demanding straight answers.

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